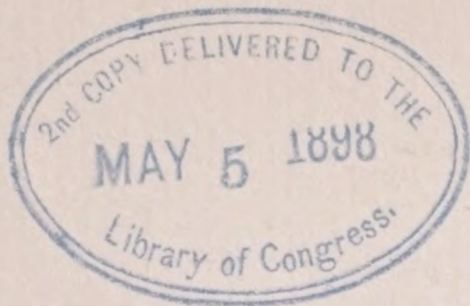


HER PLACE ASSIGNED

SCHUETTE



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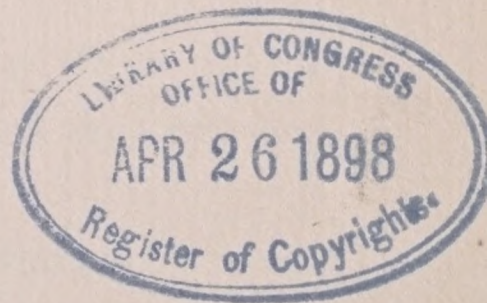
HER PLACE ASSIGNED.

A Story

FOR OLDER SUNDAY-SCHOOL SCHOLARS.

BY
WALTER E. SCHUETTE.

"O Lord, who hast my place assigned,
And made my duties plain,
Grant for my work a ready mind—
My wayward thoughts restrain."



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To the
SERVICE OF THE LORD JESUS
THIS LITTLE VOLUME HAS BEEN DEDICATED
IN THE
FAITH AND FEAR OF GOD,
BY
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THIS story has been written for those young men and young women who do not think they are too old to go to Sunday-school when they have reached the middle and upper teens. It has seemed to the author that this noble band of young people has been too little regarded in Sunday-school literature, the majority of Sunday-school books being of too juvenile a character to interest them. In many cases the want has been supplied by furnishing them books which have not been written with the welfare of their souls in view. The result has been disastrous. A book of non-religious morality, harmful in itself, becomes doubly harmful when placed on the shelves of our Sunday-school libraries.

The events of the narrative have been taken from every-day home life, for reasons that will become obvious on its perusal.

The importance of the subject dealt with is acknowledged by all. Its presentation to the minds of young people has been regarded by the writer

as highly desirable and certain to produce beneficial results.

While this story has been written mainly for older scholars, the author is fully confident that it contains nothing which will harm the mind or the soul of the younger into whose hands it may happen, as it deals entirely with events that come under their keen observation every day in the home circle.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
THE CLASS OF '81, R. H. S.	7
CHAPTER II.	
THE COMMITTEE	16
CHAPTER III.	
THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT	33
CHAPTER IV.	
THE DONERS	49
CHAPTER V.	
"THERE IS A REAPER"	64
CHAPTER VI.	
SOME YOUNG FOLKS' DOINGS	83
CHAPTER VII.	
CONFIRMATION.	100
CHAPTER VIII.	
THE MIDDLEERS	114
CHAPTER IX.	
A JOLLY TIME.	130
CHAPTER X.	
COMMENCEMENT.	150
CHAPTER XI.	
TWO ADDRESSES	164

	PAGE
CHAPTER XII.	
AN UNEXPECTED VOYAGE	179
CHAPTER XIII.	
NEW FRIENDS	197
CHAPTER XIV.	
HOME AGAIN	216
CHAPTER XV.	
"GOOD BYE"	235
CHAPTER XVI.	
A SUMMER'S OUTING.	242
CHAPTER XVII.	
"WHAT GOD HATH JOINED"	271
CHAPTER XVIII.	
MRS. HELEN.	289
CHAPTER XIX.	
CORINE	308
CHAPTER XX.	
THE GREAT STRIKE.	334
CHAPTER XXI.	
A SURRENDER.	363
CHAPTER XXII.	
ANOTHER SURRENDER	382
CHAPTER XXIII.	
THE CLASS ONCE MORE	397

CHAPTER I.

THE CLASS OF '81, R. H. S.

"WELL, I move that Tom Green be elected chairman *pro tem.*" It was Fannie Drew's saucy voice that said this.

"Second the motion!" chorused the whole class, even Tom forgetting himself and joining in the boisterous support.

"Carried!" asserted Fannie. "Jane, you and Willie escort him to the platform."

This was done amid a storm of laughter and applause that made the stately old school-room feel that its dignity had been violated. Never mind! This was just about what took place every year when the new "First Years" met at the beginning of their High School course.

Riverton High School was justly famed for its excellent work. A State governor, four senators and numerous congressmen, eight college professors, and some thirteen clergymen called it their *Alma Mater*, not to mention dozens of successful lawyers, also bankers and other business men; and,

above all others, scores of charming women who, almost without exception, had been imbued with a good measure of thorough-going common sense in addition to their liberal education, as was amply proved by their intelligent and sensible womanhood in later life. No wonder that, what with the dignity and pride accruing from this record, coupled with the strict order insisted upon by Miss Marker, the old room always felt a nervous shock when the new "First Years" met to organize.

But what could the poor old room do? Here they were again, this year more boisterous than ever, and nobody nigh to hinder. So, with a good-natured sigh and a sly wink, which seemed to mean that hard study and up-hill work would soon tone down this exuberance of noisy spirit, the old room concluded to allow the meeting to proceed.

This the meeting did as follows: Tom arose to deliver the customary "speech by the Chair." He was well fitted for the position to which he had been elected, having served for two years as Chairman of a rhetorical section in the Grammar grades.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I thank you very sincerely for the honor conferred upon me by yourselves in making me your temporary chairman, and I hope that I shall be able to serve you as such for many years."

"O my!" interposed Fannie. "Just listen! Temporary chairman for many years! Law sakes! Do tell!"

The class did "listen," and they did "tell." They overwhelmed Tom with a complete barnyard chorus of cackles and quacks and brays and bahs. He saw how ridiculous his blunder was, and, audacious though he had always proved himself, he could not keep back a quick blush of confusion that reddened his stout face up to the roots of his curly brown hair. But he was too plucky to allow himself to become much disconcerted. So, putting on an air of stern dignity which he could affect even at the most trying moments, he rapped the desk with his knuckles and called for order.

When Tom was careful enough he could express himself quite well.

"It would be useless," he continued, "on my part, to try to express my appreciation of this honor; but I cannot permit this opportunity to pass without openly acknowledging that it is due to the excellent judgment of Miss Fannie Drew that I have been thus highly exalted. I therefore hereby publicly and solemnly promise that I shall reward her by buying her one of those little toy balloons in Daddy Rice's window, that she has been looking at so wistfully every day for at least two months."

In the hubbub that followed nothing was distinguishable but Fannie's voice shrilling out: "You horrid, mean boy! Just you wait!" Tom was perfectly willing to wait. He and Fannie always were at swords' points, and almost always to his discomfiture. This time he had had sweet revenge.

As soon as the confusion had so far subsided that further steps were possible, Tom again applied his knuckles to the desk-top, and, assuming a very business-like and methodical air, proceeded.

"We have met here," he continued, "for the purpose of organizing ourselves as a class that is to do honor to Riverton High School. The first thing in order is the appointment of a temporary secretary."

Several names were proposed; the choice falling on Fannie. She seated herself at the other end of the long desk, as far from Tom as possible. Tom then resumed.

"We will now attend to whatever business may be in hand to reach the end of our organization. The Chair will be pleased to entertain suggestions from any member present."

At this one of the girls, a blue-eyed, blonde-haired little maid, whom the girls called Posey, but whose name was Rosie—Rose Berner—arose

to say: "Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that we select our class colors first. I think blue and pink would be nice."

"I like brown and gold better," said another.

"We boys want some red in it," piped Willie Seeler.

"Boys don't know what's nice," interrupted Fannie.

"They do too," retorted Willie. "I appeal to the class. Besides, I think we ought to practice the High School yell first."

The class was not listening. It had separated into little groups. Each group seemed to be discussing preferences in colors. No one appeared to remember that a meeting of the class was being held.

The busy hum of their voices was interrupted by Tom's manly tones. He was saying, "Miss Helen Doner has the floor."

The mention of Helen Doner's name at once drew the attention of the class to her. One could observe at a glance that her schoolmates had learned to respect her. When Tom had spoken, all eyes were turned to a seat at one side of the room, a little in the rear. Two girls sat there who had as yet taken no solo parts in the discussions. In some respects they appeared much alike.

They had the same gentle brown eyes, eyes that gave promise of flashing fire enough when occasion demanded; they had the same soft, pale-brown hair with golden glint, the same fair complexions, the same high-arched foreheads, the same intelligent and noble-principled expressions. There was with each the same neatness of dress and toilet, the same quietness of demeanor. But one of these girls was stronger in build than the other, and her face betokened more of boldness and self-reliance, while that of her companion indicated more of sweetness and trust. Yet, both faces showed firmness and decision without loss of gentleness and kindness, and both of these young women impressed one with more than passing favor. The stronger of these two was Corine Hereford; the other, her cousin, Helen Doner. At Tom's announcement Helen rose to speak.

"Mr. Chairman," said she, "it seems to me that, as interested as we all naturally are in our class colors and" (with a look and a smile in Willie's direction) "in our High School yell, there are a few more important things to think of before those. Would it not be better if we would first of all lay down some principles according to which we, as a class, resolve to live? I mean principles that will keep before us our duties as a class of

this school and as members of this class. Not that we should expect to do the things that would be resolved simply because we have pledged ourselves to them, but because they are the right and our duty—things that we ought to do at any rate without making special resolutions, but of which a pledge will remind us, and which it will keep clearly before us, so that mistakes and errors will be less likely to occur. Then, in addition to these principles, we should have some rules to govern us as an organization. After these matters are arranged we certainly all will agree that the others mentioned must not be forgotten.”

Helen's wisdom was in advance of her fifteen years, and in advance of the learning of the greater number of her classmates. They were, almost all of them, bright scholars, but Helen's parents had given her a very sensible training at home in addition to that which she received at school. Especially in regard to her reading had her father been careful, not merely insisting that only sound and wholesome literature be admitted to her library, but helping her to become interested in books and articles which to the average young person seem too “dry” for perusal.

Helen's remarks were received by the chair in respectful silence. Presently Tom spoke up:

"The Chair would be pleased to have Miss Hereford's opinion on this suggestion."

"Mr. Chairman," Corine responded, "I fully agree with what Helen has said, and I move that a committee be appointed to frame a set of resolutions declaring our principles, and also to draft articles and by-laws which shall govern us as a class organization."

Corine was her cousin Helen's chum, one year her senior. Their parents were not only relatives but also close friends. The girls had received the same training, with one exception. What this exception was will soon become apparent.

Corine's motion received hearty support and was unanimously adopted.

"Who shall comprise the committee?" asked Tom.

"Helen and Corine, of course," declared several girls.

"Correct!" said big Jim Stevens.

"No vote will be necessary," stated the Chair. "The Misses Doner and Hereford are hereby appointed as such committee. When shall we meet to receive the committee's report?"

"To-day is Friday—I would suggest next Tuesday afternoon, after school hours," said Helen.

"Mr. President," said Jim, "I move you that

this meeting stand adjourned until next Tuesday afternoon at 4:15 p. m. sharp."

"Is the motion supported?" asked the Chair.

"Yes," came from several voices.

"All favoring the motion will signify by voting 'aye'—all 'ayes.' We stand adjourned," ruled the Chair.

And the class of '81, R. H. S., fourteen strong, passed out into the corridor, each member free from care, and happy in the cheerfulness of youth, yet strangely affected by the new dignity and responsibility which seemed to have come upon them, especially since Helen Doner's earnest speech.

CHAPTER II.

THE COMMITTEE.

HELEN and Corine, although close friends, were not exactly near neighbors. Their homes were at least a mile apart, and both almost two miles from the High School building. For about half of this distance the girls could keep each other company; then their ways parted. It was an unheard-of thing for either one of them to go home from school without the company of the other for that part of the distance which they could travel together. As they were going home after this first meeting of their class, they very naturally discussed plans in regard to their work as committee to present the resolutions expected at the next meeting.

“Let me see,” said Helen, “to-morrow is Saturday. I will be helping mamma all forenoon, and in the afternoon there is my practice and music lesson. Then comes Sunday—suppose you go home with me after school Monday evening, Corine, and stay for tea. After we have finished our work, papa and I can take you home, or, better

yet, you can stay with me over night, and go to school from our house with me in the morning."

"All right, I'll ask mamma," said Corine. "Don't you think it would be a good plan if we would both write down points as they occur to us between this and Monday evening, so that when we get at work we will be prepared to finish sooner and do our work more thoroughly?"

"What a practical head you have, Corine," smiled Helen. "You always do think of the right thing to do. I wish I had half the go-ahead spirit that you have."

"Nonsense, Helen," protested Corine; "you know everybody is always saying what a sensible girl you are. By the way, I have the best 'trade-last' for you."

"Have you? Let me think. Oh, yes! Professor Raines told mamma that you played your *Barcarole* and *Scherzo* so well at the last rehearsal that he is confident you will have a splendid success at the recital next week. Now what's mine?"

"Why," said Corine, with evident pleasure, "that was surely kind of Professor Raines; he is so sparing of his compliments. But yours is a still better one, Nellie, at least you will think so." (Corine was the only person who ever nicknamed Helen.) "I heard Superintendent Scranton tell

your papa that he wished all women were as womanly as you are. He said if they were he would have no fears for the country's future. What do you think of that?"

"Corine, you mustn't listen when people say such untrue things about me." Helen blushed deeply, and it was not entirely a blush of embarrassment. She was truly pleased, for she considered the compliment, especially as it came from Mr. Scranton, a very high one, and she knew that papa was pleased, and she could see that Corine was, too. There was no selfishness in this dear cousin, her dearest friend.

With a kiss and a smile, these two High School girls parted. As each went her way homeward alone, her thoughts were on the work in the hands of the committee; but, strangely enough, Helen was planning the guiding principles, while Corine was mapping out the Constitution and By-Laws.

They met again on Sunday morning at Sunday-school. Helen's parents were staunch members of old St. Luke's Lutheran congregation. Helen's interest in the church, its faith and its work, was as great as that of her parents. Pastor Denton felt himself almost as much at home at the Doners' as in his own comfortable parsonage.

There are in almost every congregation five or

six families on whom the pastor can fully depend for support and active encouragement in all his undertakings for the up-building of Christ's kingdom. The Doners were eminently one of these families. When the project of building the new \$30,000 church had first been broached four years before, the congregation, almost to a man, had stood aghast. But the project had been carried out, and now St. Luke's had no debts. Mr. Doner always declared that the building could not have been done under any other pastor's leadership, but Pastor Denton always insisted that if the Lord had not placed Deacon Doner in St. Luke's, the congregation would still be worshiping in the old church on the side street, instead of in the beautiful house on the finest church site in town.

The pastor and the deacon were close friends, "almost like brothers," Mrs. Doner would say to Mrs. Denton. They had not known each other until six years before, when they had met at a convention of Synod, which the deacon had attended as a lay delegate. Rev. Denton had filled the pulpit at the first evening service of the convention, and had made a very strong impression on Mr. Doner by his evident sincerity, his magnetic animation, and the soundness of his discourse. Mr. Doner was happy to find, after the service, that he

and the Reverend were to be room-mates at the hotel. During their companionship there he learned that the pastor was as fine a man as he was a preacher. When, six months later, a vacancy occurred at St. Luke's in Riverton, a call was promptly sent to the Rev. Denton, on the advice of Mr. Doner. Never was man more highly pleased than was the deacon when he returned home one spring evening from a special meeting of the church council, and reported to his family that the call had been accepted, and that the new pastor would be with them at the beginning of the next month.

"Now, mamma," said he, as joyous as a boy, "it will take the pastor's at least two weeks to get settled, and for those two weeks they shall be our guests." And so they were, except that the two weeks became three, as the pastor's goods were delayed in transit. But even at the end of the three weeks every one of the Doners was sorry to see them leave, and the Dentons declared that they wished their goods had been delayed longer.

After that the Dentons and the Doners saw each other almost every day. In their case familiarity did not breed contempt.

Helen was charmed with them all, the pastor, his wife, Harry, five years old, and Timothy, three

years younger. She and Mrs. Denton often drove out together. A better companion for a young girl could not have been imagined. The boys adored Helen, and Harry, who was now ten, would have laid down his life for her. The pastor himself was Helen's especial favorite in this family of four. He took so deep an interest in all her work and plans, and she so much admired his earnest Christian character. No one as well as he could explain the difficulties she met in the study of her Bible; no one knew so well how to make glorious in her eyes the grand old doctrines of the Word as confessed by her church. Often she read to him, or helped him with his type-writing. Papa Doner thanked God daily that the lines were fallen unto his daughter in such pleasant places. Indeed, what with her splendid home training and the influence of her association with this excellent pastor's family, her nature was unfolding into the sweetest, loveliest bloom.

A little over three years after the Dentons' coming, baby Beatrice had arrived to make the parsonage home-circle still more attractive, and that to no one more than to Helen. For her a visit to the parsonage had grown to be a positive delight, almost like going to her own dear home. Yet there was one house to which she went with still

greater pleasure than either to her home or to the pastor's. This was her dear church-home, dear St. Luke's.

It was here that we had found Helen with Corine on the Sunday morning following this class meeting. Corine always attended Sunday-school with Helen, although neither she nor her parents were members of the church. She herself often told people: "I do not profess to be a Christian." Her mother, Frank Doner's sister, had been confirmed with him. But she had lost interest in the church after her marriage to Joseph Hereford. Although she sometimes attended the evening services, her church membership otherwise had practically ceased. As for Mr. Hereford, he had never joined any church. Although not a scoffer, he was not a Christian.

The Herefords became good friends of the new pastor's family soon after his arrival. It could not well have been otherwise, as both these families were so intimately associated with the Doners. The pastor had endeavored to awaken in the Herefords a love for Christ and the church, but it soon became apparent to him that beneath the polite attention with which his words were received there was a distinct coldness of heart toward the Savior. He did not urge the matter,

knowing full well that "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," and remembering that God's Word works as does a leaven, slowly but thoroughly, and generally best when left to work without human aid or intervention.

In this the pastor resembled the deacon. Mr. Doner had brought many souls into the fold of the church, but always in a quiet way, using few words and giving God's Spirit time to perform the saving work of conversion. St. Luke's was all the better established by reason of this method. There were not long lists of members who had been surprised and cajoled into making a confession of faith. Those who joined did so from their heart's choice, and this choice had been implanted and deliberately matured by God; it was not the outburst of nervous excitement or momentary enthusiasm.

It will be noticed that Corine could receive no religious training at home. The absence of Christian faith from her heart was what caused that difference between her and her cousin Helen, a difference so difficult to describe, and, at the same time, so difficult to overlook. Corine's attendance at Sunday-school was not calculated to supply the want. While Helen attended as a devout believer, Corine attended merely as Helen's companion.

After Sunday-school, as the two cousins were leaving the room, Helen asked: "Will you stay for the service this morning?"

"Not to-day, Nellie," was Corine's answer. "Papa has set his heart on driving out to Uncle Charlie's, and he insists on our going with him. Perhaps I can stay next Sunday."

"Then you will not be here for the evening sermon?"

"I hardly think so. It will be very near church-time when we return from the country, and I know we will be tired with the long drive. Good-bye, Nellie; I must not keep papa waiting."

"Good-bye. I hope you'll have a pleasant time." But in her heart Helen could not understand how people could neglect God's house on Sundays and, at the same time, have a pleasant Sunday.

This was her one great sadness, that her dear cousin and her uncle and aunt cared so little for the church. She had spoken to Pastor Denton about it. He had reassured her that God's resources were not so easily exhausted, and that her prayers for them might yet be answered.

The sermon that day served to lead Helen into a train of deep thought. Especially did one expression that the pastor used have this effect. "Do

not be discouraged," he said, "by repeated failures in a good undertaking. Things are not always what they seem. Your endeavors that have seemed vain may require but one more rally to make them victorious. Barriers that seem to you not to have been shaken an inch, may yet be ready to totter and fall at one more word, yes, perhaps even at one more simple look. How the Lord had labored and prayed that Peter's soul might be established. And yet, as He sat before the high priest's court, Peter was without, denying Him with oaths and curses. The Lord's labor seemed all in vain. Nevertheless we read that just at that moment the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter went out and wept bitterly. In that flood of repentant tears was swept away the last barrier that separated Peter from that firmness and fortitude that made his faith forever after impregnable as a fortress, aggressive as a host of armed men."

These words were still sounding in Helen's ears when the pastor was making his announcements. Among other things, he announced that in the week following, the instruction of that year's catechumens would begin. Helen resolved that she would try for Corine's soul once more. Here was an opportunity. She would ask her to join the class.

She was glad, next day, when she met her cousin on the way to school, that Corine's first words told her that "Mamma says I may go home with you this evening and stay till tomorrow;" because, with the morning, she had only strengthened her resolve to ask Corine to join the class. It needed strength of resolve, for Helen's nature was not such as to enable her to ask a delicate thing more than once. From her previous efforts at discussing the topic of Corine's salvation with her, she knew that the subject she intended to broach would be a delicate one. Corine would not discuss it with her long; Corine had such a matter-of-fact way of closing the conversation on any subject not agreeable to her. Besides, Helen could not argue it long herself. So she continued to fortify herself with frequent thoughts of the previous morning's sermon, and was continually wondering what would be the most propitious time and the most promising way to introduce the subject.

The opportunity came soon after school hours in the afternoon. They were walking home together, Corine, Fannie Drew, and Helen. Fannie, for once, was in a sober, meditative mood. She had been at church with Helen the evening before. Perhaps she did not intend that the conversation

should become quite so serious as it did, for she started it by saying only:

“What a lovely preacher Mr. Denton is, Helen, and what a grand sermon he preached last night.”

Helen’s eyes glistened with pleasure. She delighted to hear her pastor appreciated.

“What was it about?” inquired Corine.

That opened the way for a girls’ discussion of the sermon, that would have rejoiced the heart of the Reverend Denton himself, had he been near to hear it.

When Fannie left the cousins, they were both in an earnest mood. What happier time could our young missionary select for her important work?

“Corine,” she ventured, half shyly, “there was something else that the pastor said yesterday that I want to tell you. He announced that catechetical instructions would begin next week. You know that I am to be confirmed this year; I want you to join the class, and to see whether you cannot come to the conclusion that it is for your good to join the church and to believe in Christ fully. Will you?”

Corine did not answer at once. When she did, she asked: “When will the confirmation be?”

“Next spring, at Whitsunday, I think,” said Helen.

“Will you be instructed and confirmed with the class, Helen?”

“Why, of course I will, Corine. What makes you ask that?”

“Well, just this. I heard several of the girls of the B-Grammar class telling, this morning, that they are to be confirmed next spring. Why, Nellie, they were mere children. I don’t believe they will be older than thirteen in the spring. Now don’t you think it will look a little bit queer for you, a High School girl, to go into a class with them? I am sure I should not like it for myself, and you are only a year younger than I am.”

“But we are not grown-ups yet, are we?” asked Helen, with an amused smile.

“No, but we’re not infants either, exactly. Say, Nellie, why weren’t you confirmed younger? You could have passed the examination two years ago, or even before that.”

“Well, Corine, it’s this way: I have been attending the instructions for three years already, but papa thought it unwise to have me confirmed so young. He thinks the same about other children. Reverend Denton is of exactly the same mind. Of course there are circumstances in some families that make it almost necessary to have the children confirmed at an early age. Their parents, being

poor, need the help of the children, and want them confirmed before they leave school and go out to work. I have heard Reverend Denton say that, although he thinks it is better to have us wait for confirmation until we are fifteen or sixteen, yet there is no reason for doubting that the Holy Spirit can make Himself understood to the heart of a child but thirteen years old, and that the children confirmed at that age do not for that reason necessarily partake of the sacrament unworthily. Besides, it seems there are many cases where, if children are not confirmed at thirteen, they will not be confirmed at all; and, although our church does not teach that confirmation is necessary to salvation, still this rite means so much, that our pastors hesitate to refuse to confirm children when they have to decide between confirmation at an early age and no confirmation at all. I, for one, will not feel myself disgraced to stand at the altar with children who, by force of circumstances, are sent there younger than I am, and who, perhaps, are better children of God than I. Corine, this is no reason why you should not join our class. You know very well that Reverend Denton would be willing to confirm you separately, or at home if you preferred. You must have some other objection."

Helen had spoken so earnestly, and now, at the

close of her little sermon, she looked up into Corine's face with eyes so appealing that certainly her cousin must yield. But she did not yield. She spoke very gently, however.

“Well, Helen, you are both right and wrong. It did indeed seem, and still seems to me, very undesirable to be confirmed with so mixed a class. But that was not my only reason. Do you know, I am afraid I do not agree with all that the Bible teaches? I respect the Bible highly, and for that very reason I do not like to become too well acquainted with it, as I fear I would lose some of this respect. Let me mention just one thing. You know how much mamma and I are together. Well, mamma is a member of several women's unions, the ‘Reform League’ and the ‘Twentieth Century Association.’ In addition, she reads a great deal. She has a habit of talking with me about the topics they discuss at their meetings and those about which she reads. Mamma and I agree on all points. Of course, it is not she that agrees with me, but I with her. The other evening we called at the parsonage, and in some unfortunate way mamma and Reverend Denton got into a discussion on woman's rights. Mrs. Denton and I did nothing but sit there and listen and fidget. Now, from the way the pastor quoted the Bible in sup-

port of his assertions, I know that I do not agree with it. But say, Nellie, let's talk about something else, will you? And you will not be mad at me, sweetheart?"

How could Helen be angry? She was very much grieved, it is true. But the words of that precious sermon recurred to her. It seemed to her that Corine's defense of her position was much weaker than it had been on former occasions. It was gentler, she knew, and less impatient and testy. Was the pastor a prophet? Were the barriers beginning to totter? Would they soon fall? Helen hoped so, and she would wait. But oh! how often hope must wait days and days, and years and years, for that for which the heart is breaking.

Papa Doner laughed at the two little legislators, as he called them, when they told him of their work and settled down after tea in his library to frame their articles. But when, after half an hour, they called him to help them, no one was happier than he.

Corine loved him so much, this dear Uncle Frank. And when she and Helen had gone to bed that night and had settled down to sleep after the long chat that girls must always have before slumber will come, Corine was wondering. She

was wondering what the strange difference was that made her love Helen's father almost better than her own, and she wondered still further whether the difference came because her uncle was a Christian and a zealous church-member, while her father was neither. She fell asleep still wondering, but her wonder did not fall asleep, not for many days.

CHAPTER III.

THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

THE two girls had agreed that Corine should present the business rules to the class, while Helen was to read the "law," as Corine playfully called it. "You can defend that part a great deal better than I can if there should be any debate," she had told Helen; and Helen for her part was glad enough to leave the business matters to Corine.

The meeting was not long in coming to order. The temporary officers were punctual and prompt, and it was only a few minutes after the "4:15 p. m. sharp" of Jim Stevens' clock-work resolution, when the minutes of the previous meeting had already been read and approved, and Tom was calling for the report of the committee.

"Mr. Chairman," responded Corine, "the committee has divided its work according to the subject matter in hand, and wishes to present two reports. Helen's report deals with our class ethics, and mine with our class business."

"Good," remarked the Chair. "Which report shall we consider first?"

"Helen's, Helen's!" came from different parts of the room.

"It seems that the other report is really more necessary," observed Tom significantly. "I must insist on better order. Mr. Stevens, the Chair recognizes you."

"Gracious! What alarming airs our president puts on!" Fannie was heard to whisper across the desk to the other girls.

"Mr. Chairman," said the ponderous Jim, "I move that that part of the report which is in the hands of Miss Doner be now received."

The motion was put and carried. Helen rose to read her part. It ran as follows:

"We, the class of 1881, Riverton High School, do herewith pledge ourselves for our three years of High School life to observe strictly and conscientiously the following principles, believing that by so doing we shall lighten the burdens of our beloved instructors, benefit ourselves, and gain the greater esteem of our friends and school-mates.

"We promise:

"1st. To be diligent in study, prompt in school attendance, attentive at recitations;

"2d. Always, in school hours and at other times, to be respectful and obedient to our teachers and other superiors, and polite to our fellow students;

“3d. To observe a ladylike and gentlemanly decorum while going to school and while returning home from school;

“4th. To strive to be a credit to our school in everything;

“5th. To foster a proper and legitimate class spirit, but without in any manner encouraging a hateful spirit toward other classes;

“6th. To encourage each other in our work, and not to show any distinction in our treatment of each other because we are not all equally gifted;

“7th. Neither to practice nor to tolerate any unfair methods in gaining advantages in standing;

“8th. To admonish, in a spirit of entire kindness, those who happen to be violating these pledges;

“9th. To observe the spirit, and not only the letter, of the principles here laid down;

“10th. To live up to these rules not simply because we have pledged ourselves, but because it is our duty to live thus.”

“I would suggest,” modestly added Helen, “that these paragraphs be considered one by one, so that they may be discussed and amended where necessary.”

“As if they needed any amending, or could get any from us blockheads,” came from impulsive Fannie. Then, recollecting herself as Tom was

preparing to call "order" again, she continued: "Mr. President, I move you that we adopt these principles heart and soul, shoes and shoestrings, just as read, without any alterations or amendments at all, sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, E Pluribus Unum!"

The class had heard samples of Fannie's oratory before this, and had often laughed at her extravagance. But this time they were all as enthusiastic as she was, and, after asking Helen to read her report again, a little more slowly than she had read it the other time, her paragraphs were adopted with a vigor and a decision that promised much for the future morality and greatness of the class.

Corine's report was then read, and received and adopted with just as much favor, although, naturally, with less enthusiasm. When presented aright, matters of right and wrong, of duty and principle, generally appeal to the interest of mankind more strongly than matters of mere technical order and business routine. How happy this world would be if the same could be said of religious matters other than morals, matters of faith and the soul's salvation.

Corine's Constitution and By-Laws called for the election of officers by ballot. This election was next attended to. A permanent chairman was to

be elected first. The result of the ballot was: Tom Green, five votes; Fannie Drew, five votes; Corine Hereford, four votes. As eight votes were necessary for a choice, a second ballot was ordered. It resulted, Tom, seven votes; Fannie, two, and Corine, five. The third ballot was decisive, Tom receiving nine votes, Fannie, two, and Corine, three.

Quite an excitement had developed during the progress of this balloting, but each of the remaining elections was decided by one ballot. Fannie was elected vice-president, Corine, recording secretary, Milda Trapp, corresponding secretary, and Jim Stevens, treasurer. An executive committee was chosen, consisting of the president and two other members, Helen Doner and John Perkins.

Perhaps it will be best if I here and now tell you more about the two members whom we have not mentioned before, but whom the class election has introduced. Milda was one of those exact girls who always insist that things must be just so. Perhaps her German blood had a hand in deciding this characteristic. At any rate, she often disputed with her classmates about the veriest trifles, but it must be acknowledged that she was generally in the right about them. She was as neat as a pin, and her penmanship was something marvelous.

No one had ever known her to break a promise or to forget an engagement. The class did wisely when they selected her as their corresponding secretary.

John Perkins was one of those determined and enterprising young fellows whom it is so genuine a pleasure to meet; one of the kind we so often meet in books, but whose existence in real life we are inclined to consider doubtful. This John was not, perhaps, so wonderful a boy as the noble intelligent specimens found in the books; but he was a real, live, flesh-and-blood boy, and I, for my part, always thought him knowing and prudent above the average.

John's father had been a poor market-gardener. He had had excellent success in his garden, and moderate success in his finances. But there had always been so much sickness in the family that it was up-hill work to lay anything by for a rainy day.

In spite of his poverty, Jonathan Perkins knew that the value of a good education was above that of gold and silver. For this reason he sent his children regularly to school, when he might have used them in the gardens.

One evening in the autumn, as this industrious gardener was returning to his home from the city, he stepped out of his wagon to adjust a part of the

harness that had become disarranged. While he was engaged thus, a vicious dog came barking from a near-by yard and assailed him, leaving him with an ugly wound in the fore-arm. The family were not at first seriously alarmed, but blood poisoning set in, and they were suddenly left fatherless and helpless.

Jonathan Perkins did not leave his family possessed of much earthly treasure. However, he did not leave them burdened with debt either. The house and the four acres of garden had been paid for, as had also the horse and the wagon. Nevertheless, the question that came to the family was a very anxious one: what to do, not simply to remain alive and well, but also to continue the children at school. John was at this time almost sixteen, and had just entered the A-Grammar. His parents had had great hopes of sending him through the High School. There were three other boys, one eleven, and the twins aged nine. The smaller children were girls.

John's mother naturally looked to him to find some way out of the difficult position into which they had been placed by Mr. Perkins' death. The boy's ready wit seemed to grapple with the situation in vain, however. But not for long. One evening, two weeks after his father's death, he said:

“Ma, I have it all fixed now. If my plan works, and we boys are each willing to lose one year at school, taking turn about, we will have enough to eat and wear and buy books.”

“Well, what is it?” asked his mother, rather doubtfully.

“I’ll tell you,” said John. “This evening, as I was coming home past Simpson’s dry goods store, Mr. Simpson was standing out in front as if he were looking for somebody. I kind o’ stopped, and he looked at me as if he didn’t know what to say, and then he said it. He wanted me to take a roll of oil-cloth up to the Johnsons. I told him I would, and as I started away he gave me a quarter. That set me thinking on a new track. There are lots of stores in town that haven’t enough delivering to do to pay them to keep a horse and wagon and delivery boy, but have too much delivering to have it done by the messenger boys and draymen. It costs a great deal that way; besides, the draymen and boys are not always in sight. Why, actually, I’ve seen that big, important-looking Mr. Simpson carrying big rolls of carpet along the street himself. I guess he couldn’t find anybody to do it for him. Well, you see, we have the express wagon and Prince, and we hate to part with them. Now I intend to see as many of the storekeepers as I

can and try to make contracts with them by the year to do their delivering. I can stay out of school this year to get the business started. Next year Paul can take it—you know I can help him mornings and evenings, before and after school hours—and the next year one of the twins can drop school, and the year after that the other can. I will go to night school and can keep up my studies pretty well, and maybe I can skip the A-Grammar grade and go into High School with my class anyhow by passing the test examination. I'm going to try it. You know pa always said that God helps those that help themselves, and you know how Mr. Denton always preaches about God's help in troubles. I shouldn't wonder but God put this idea right straight into my head. I've been praying awful hard since pa died."

The widow's eyes were filled with tears. She wished she could have as much faith as her boy had, but she had her doubts about his plan. Nevertheless, she put on a cheerful air and said:

"Well, that is a good plan, and I do hope it will work well."

"Work well?" exclaimed John, getting excited and walking up and down the room. "Why ma, we'll get rich on it. Look here. I'll charge the dry goods men three dollars a month, and the

china stores two, and the clothing men two, and the shoe stores two, and the milliners a dollar, and the grocers—I'll charge them at least ten dollars a month."

"Why, the grocers all have delivery wagons," interrupted his mother.

"That's so," said John, "but I'll get enough just the same. Then, you see, we can raise enough on the place here to live on, and we can get a good many berries out of the patch to sell. Why, it's going to be great. I just wish pa could be here to help plan it."

Again the poor woman's eyes filled with tears. She arose and kissed her boy "good night," and they retired. John fell asleep, making big calculations.

He set out early next morning, and was gone until noon. His presentation of the case to the business men was very simple. He told them that there would be three deliveries per day: he would call at the stores between seven and eight o'clock in the mornings, between half past twelve and half past one at noons, and between six and seven in the evenings, every day, all the year round, and would promptly deliver all goods that they required delivered. He came home that noon quite well satisfied. Ten merchants had made contracts with

him. The others wanted to consider the matter. The income from the ten would be twenty dollars per month. With that John started business.

By the end of the week others had "fallen in line," as Paul expressed it. There were four dry goods men, five shoe dealers, seven clothiers, three china stores, and five milliners on John's list, at his own figures. He counted it up, and was surprised to find that he was earning at the rate of five hundred and sixty-four dollars per year.

The plan seemed to be just what the town merchants had been waiting for. Mr. Simpson was so happy, he paid a half year in advance. Everybody wondered why nobody had ever thought of it before. It seemed strange, but true it was, that Jonathan Perkins' sixteen-year-old boy was earning more money than his father had ever been able to earn himself. Of course the work was not easy, but John did not care for that. He was prospering beyond expectation, and, besides paying all expenses as they came, the Perkinses had quite a little sum in the bank at the end of the year. People said John had luck. He did not have "luck." He simply did what dozens of boys to-day could do if they would only trust God, use their wits, and recognize the opportunities their Heavenly Father grants them.

John had been delivering goods for a week, when one evening he had a parcel for the Doners. Helen came to the door as he rang the bell. She asked him how he was "getting along."

"Beautifully, Helen," said he.

"But what about your schooling?" she asked.

"Why, I'm going to the night school. You know that's four nights every week. On Friday nights I try to study up what you folks in the A-Grammar class have had that week. You know I had all my books for the A-Grammar when father died. Stevens shows me what your lessons have been for the week. I want to try to pass the examination for High School next spring. But there are lots of things that are hard to get right without a teacher."

"Oh, I do hope you'll succeed, John. How nice it would be to have you back again with the rest of us. There are only thirteen of us left that will enter High School if you drop out, and you know thirteen is such an unlucky number," said Helen, pretending to shudder.

"I know you don't believe any such 'unlucky number' nonsense as that, Helen, but just the same I'll try my best to make it fourteen. Good night." And he hopped down the steps.

Helen went straight to the library after John

left, and had a talk with her father. The next day John received a note from her by Jim Stevens, saying that if he would come to her home Friday evenings she would help him with the week's school work, and her father would add his help when he was not too busy. Every Friday evening after that, except at the holidays, when there was so much delivering that John could not get through early enough, they reviewed the week's lessons in the library at Mr. Doner's. The result you all know, as you have found John enrolled with the class of '81 at the High School. He had passed a fine examination, and when it came to election, the class knew just exactly why they put him on the Executive Committee.

Now it is almost time to return to the class. They are still chatting after the excitement of the election, Tom being too well pleased with his election as President to insist on order, and receiving congratulations with an air of satisfaction that was enviable. Even Fannie's sally of "Well, Tom, you can be temporary chairman all the time now," did not provoke him to a retort. He only beamed, and smiled, and was happy.

While they are all chatting I may as well present the other members of the class. There were two more boys: Harold Lee, a farmer's boy, who came

in on horseback from the country every day, and Rob Hoodley, whose father was the wealthiest man in town. The two other members of the class were girls: Mary Charman, whose mother was a seamstress, getting along quite comfortably, and Ada Lansen, a country girl, who boarded with the Charmans. The Lansens were next neighbors to the Lees. And now you have met them all, this famous Class of '81, R. H. S.

It is a good thing that we have finished these introductions, for Tom's voice is singing out, "Meeting will please come to order." When quiet was restored, the discussion on the class colors was again taken up. The chairman had scarcely announced the fact that this question would be considered, when he was assailed from all sides with suggestions as to the most appropriate and prettiest colors.

"The Secretary will read the roll," said he, "and each member will answer his or her name with a suggestion of the colors that seem to him or her most suitable; after that a vote will be taken."

The action on this suggestion resulted as follows:

Tom Green, brown and red.

Rob Hoodley, cream and white.

Harold Lee, bay and sorrel.

"That don't count, Mr. President; he's just fooling," broke in Fannie, whereat Harold changed his selection to green and gray, and Fannie thought he was still "fooling." But he insisted that that was his selection, at which Fannie gave a comical groan of despair at boys' tastes. The roll proceeded:

John Perkins, blue and gold.
Willie Seeler, red and yellow.
Jim Stevens, red and blue.
Jane Armster, lemon and rose.
Rose Berner, sky-blue and pink.
Mary Charman, old rose and white.
Helen Doner, blue and gold.
Fannie Drew, pink and white.
Corine Hereford, pink and garnet.
Ada Lansen, brown and gold.
Milda Trapp, pink and white.

"Now, has any one any remarks to make on these suggestions before the vote is taken?" questioned the President.

"Mr. Chairman," Helen arose to say, "I want to state why I think John Perkins' suggestion a good one. I think we should not choose our colors just to have something pretty and delicate, or something flashy and bright, but to have colors that will mean something. Now, in blue and gold, the colors are good, the combination is tasty,

and the blue could always mean to us truth and faithfulness, and the gold could mean real value and incorruptibleness. Pink and gray and yellow and the like haven't these instructive meanings. I believe John thought of this, too; because his choice is so different from that of the other boys."

John flushed with pleasure. It was not often that he was so appreciated; and we all know how delightful it is to be appreciated, especially unexpectedly.

No one else had any suggestions to make, so the voting began. In spite of Helen's speech, John's colors did not have smooth sailing. The boys all rallied to his support for Helen's sake, but the girls were not inclined to give up their fancies so easily, and Tom insisted that there must be a majority of the votes cast to select the colors. Finally, after four votes had been taken, no decision having been reached, the girls all seemed to yield by common consent. At least the vote was unanimous for blue and gold.

Corine and Mary were at once sent out to get the necessary ribbon. In short order it was made up into knots and streamers, and the class adjourned, to go out before the world under good, true colors, the constancy of blue, and the intrinsic worth of gold.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DONERS.

HELEN went home much pleased that evening. Her report had been adopted without a dissenting voice or even a change, and her favorite colors had finally triumphed. She was not a faultless girl, and perhaps some would have called this feeling of pleasure pride or vanity. It may have been that, but, if it was, can we blame her very much?

She could hardly wait until she reached home to tell the others of the family how well her work had fared at the hands of the class. Up the wide walk she tripped as happy as a bird. It seemed as though she were afraid some one else would reach the house before she did, and break the good news first.

The home to which Helen was returning was one of the most beautiful, although not the grandest by far, in town. The grounds were large and park-like, with tall trees and bushy shrubs. The well-kept lawn was dotted here and there with beds of flowers and bright-leaved foliage plants.

The house was set at a distance from the street. It was large and roomy, one of these old houses built of stone, covered with Virginia creeper. Across the front a wide veranda extended. The rooms of the house were high and stately. The interior had been remodeled and refurnished in such a manner as to make this old house quite as desirable as the more modern dwellings that were being erected with such lavish expenditure farther out the street.

There was more wealth in Riverton than one would have expected in a town of its size. It will undoubtedly always be so. Appearances deceive. People in larger cities generally make more show than those in smaller towns, by living beyond their income. But the greater comfort and well-being will, as a rule, be found in our smaller villages.

Mr. Doner had been offered a handsome amount for his property some years before the time of our story, by a rich manufacturer who happened to be delayed in Riverton several hours, and who was so pleased with the appearance of the town that he thought he might like to retire there to live. But Mr. Doner had refused definitely. Some weeks afterwards this man wrote, offering a still larger price, but Mr. Doner would not part with his home.

Helen at that time was anxious to have her father sell the old place, and build a modern resi-

dence. She had been so taken with the fine new house that Fannie Drew's father had just then built. She could not see what deterred her father from accepting the offer that had been made him.

"Why, papa," she had said, "with that money you could buy a new lot farther out the street and put up a fine new house, better than this old one, and have some money left besides."

"What financiers you children are," her father had answered. "But there is one thing you do not remember, Helen. Another house would be an easy thing to get, but not another home. Stone and brick and mortar and wood will build a house very readily, but there is something else necessary to build a home, and it takes years of time to do it. Money will not buy it, nor will new styles of architecture supply it. So we will stay here and be all the happier."

Helen said no more, but she could not see what the difference was between a house and a home. She did not then understand what a power associations and memories have for us when we have grown older. She was now beginning to appreciate her father's position, however, and took as much pride in her home as did Fannie in their grand new house, and was perfectly content to live there forever if need be.

The Doners were quite a household, there being four children beside Helen. In addition Grandma had for eight years made her home with them. Mr. Doner was a firm believer in large families, and he always claimed that he failed to see much happiness in any one's life unless his house were full of children. It was also a conceit of his that God was nearer with a plenty of children about. He firmly believed that children were a heritage of the Lord, and that God's blessing rested more abundantly on the home full of children than on the childless house. Himself one of a family of six children, he had been the father of seven, two that were born before Helen having died. Nothing could have made this kind-hearted, sweet-souled man happier than to have had all seven of his "babies," as he still often called them all, about him.

He was, in truth, a rare man, this Frank Doner. He had been born and raised on the old Doner farm, six miles east of Riverton. His father had been comfortably circumstanced, and had given him a good school training, had put him through the High School at Riverton (at that time less pretentious in its course and teaching force than now), and had then sent him for four years to college, where he had been graduated with fair honors.

On his finishing the college course it was the intention that he should enter a theological seminary and prepare himself for the ministry.

"I love the old farm," Squire Doner used to say, "and would like to have Frank running it after my day is over; but the Lord needs men in His harvest, and no one seems willing to furnish them. Our rich people care more for money than for God's cause, and our poor people cannot afford the necessary education. So I shall try to make a parson of my boy. Maria, she agrees with me, and Frank can keep his share of the old farm for a place to spend his summer vacations, provided he gets any," and the old farmer would end with a merry twinkle in his eyes and a broad chuckle in his hearty voice.

But his plans did not carry. While Frank was spending that summer after his graduation at the old homestead, his father suffered a severe sun-stroke one afternoon in the harvest field. Frank at once "pitched in" and managed the crops during his father's illness. This illness did not last long. Squire Doner recovered consciousness, then he lingered about in a weak and helpless condition for four weeks, when he gently fell asleep.

On his father's death Frank thought it necessary to change all his plans. He decided to manage

the farm for his mother and the girls. This was no easy task, as the farm contained six hundred and forty acres.

A year after the father's death there was a double wedding in the old farm-house, two of the girls marrying and leaving the old homestead. After this the farm was divided into six shares, one for each of the children, Mrs. Doner declaring that she needed nothing, as she knew her girls and her boy would take care of her. Several well-meaning, all-knowing neighborhood gossips endeavored to dissuade her from her purpose. But she refused to discuss the matter with them at all.

Frank stayed on the farm and worked his own land and that belonging to the three girls who were still at home. A year later he married, and the girls, with their mother, removed to Riverton, where they took a pleasant cottage, Lena having accepted a temporary position in the schools (she expected to be married soon), Emma attending High School, and Eliza doing the housekeeping.

Frank had met his wife at Joseph Hereford's house. He and Joe had gone to college together, and he was naturally at Joe's home during much of his vacation time. Emma Naper was visiting Joe's sisters one summer, and a friendship sprang up between her and Frank Doner. She and Carrie

Hereford spent a few days with Frank's sisters. She was perfectly delighted with the farm. Frank's parents thought they had never seen a sweeter girl. So, when after his graduation he had asked his parents' consent to his marriage with Emma some time in the future, they had readily granted their consent together with their blessing.

The young couple's plans were to stay on the farm. They knew that the work would be too trying for Emma, but Frank had planned all that. "If I can keep three men to help me, why shouldn't you have two or three girls to help you?" he said; and so they arranged it.

The plan worked well enough for a time. The profits were naturally smaller as the expense was greater, but Frank was not one of those farmers who believe in building up big farms on the ruins of their hard-working wives. His theory was, "Money is not the main thing in life. Happiness and health come before wealth." And their life was happy, except for the fact that their two babies died.

The old home seemed rather sad and cheerless after that. Just at that time Riverton was beginning a big boom and putting on city airs. It became very difficult to find girls who were willing to work in the country. So Frank and his wife

decided to remove to town. The four shares of the farm that they had been managing were parceled into two farms, an old tenant-house that stood on Eliza's land having been repaired and made habitable. Into this the Lansens moved. The Lees were to take possession of the old homestead after Frank and his wife had gone to the city. But what would they undertake in the city?

That was soon settled. Joe Hereford and Lena Doner had been married shortly before. They drove out to visit Frank and Emma one afternoon. Joe was having trouble with his partner in the dry goods business. He had about decided to sell out his interest. He and Frank talked the situation over seriously. The result was that they decided to set up a flour and feed store and try their fortunes in it. It would not require an investment of much cash capital, and they would be the first to enter that business in Riverton.

The store proved a success from the start. Both young men were popular and well-liked. Their profits were really good, and, encouraged thereby, they pushed their business forward with commendable enterprise. Five years later the old mill in the rear of their store was for sale. They bought it, equipped it with new machinery, and were soon doing a lively merchant milling business. At the

time of which we are writing the old store had become a new block, the mill had been enlarged and a good-sized grain elevator stood beside the mill. The huge letters of a sign across its front spelled out, "Riverton Milling and Elevator Co." Frank was president, Joe vice-president and treasurer, and two others were interested as partners. Riverton was the natural market for an extensive and productive grain country. Everybody had known old Squire Doner, and any attempts at starting an elevator in opposition to his sons' would have been useless. The boys, they were still called boys, had the good will of the community from the outset, and kept it by strict honesty and by winning and agreeable business methods.

Their success had warranted Frank's buying his beautiful home soon after his removal to town. He secured it at a low price and on terms convenient to him. It had been sadly neglected and allowed to deteriorate. He had thoroughly repaired it and had been living there now over fifteen years. Helen had been born there, and all the younger children, and it seemed more like home to him than the old homestead on the farm did. After they had lived in the house two years Frank—but we had better call him Mr. Doner now—had had the kitchen and the rear part of the house re-

modeled, so that his wife's housework could be done more conveniently. Two years before the date of this chapter the remaining portion of the house had received a thorough overhauling. So the Doners could not be blamed for taking a contented pride in their home.

Mrs. Doner was one of those sweet, motherly women who make a good impression on you when you first meet them, and who strengthen this impression on every occasion on which you come into contact with them afterwards. She had been a beautiful girl, and seemed so young and pretty still that everybody could judge that she had a loving husband and a lovely home life. She was not the disciplinarian of the family. That office she left to Mr. Doner. As jolly and genial as he was, in matters of obedience he was very firm with his children. Mrs. Doner often said, "Papa, you ought to yield a little," but she did not mean it, knowing that his firmness of character had won him her love and others' esteem, and that firmness of character cannot rightfully be expected of children where no firmness of discipline has been exercised.

Mrs. Doner was a splendid housekeeper, never employing more than one servant girl, excepting when it was absolutely necessary, and at all times keeping the affairs of the whole household under

her own personal supervision. It was her custom to have the children learn to help her early. After Helen was thirteen she dispensed with servants entirely, except at house cleaning time. The washing and ironing were done by a colored laundress who lived across the river, who knew exactly how the "missus" wanted every piece done. She did it just so, too, everything being brought home clean and ironed neatly.

Mrs. Doner had been a church member from her childhood, belonging to the denomination to which her husband had always belonged, and being as earnest and religious as he. On removing to River-ton she had at once become the most active worker at St. Luke's. She was one of those happy, cheerful workers whose efforts are really a help to the church. She was intelligent, with a good education, and with more than ordinary powers of insight and judgment. In any undertaking at St. Luke's it was always, "Oh, ask Mrs. Doner," and "We'd better leave that to Mrs. Doner," etc., and she bore this respect and deference to her own ability with so charming a grace and unselfishness that no one disliked her or envied her her position.

It is strange that in churches there are always so many people who do not want to take hold of the

work ; but when a few step forward and do lay hands on the work and make it "go", those very ones who would not work are at once saying, "H'm, see how John Smith is taking things into his own hands," "Mrs. Brown acts as if she thought she were the head of the whole congregation," and so on. Mrs. Doner's style and nature did not allow of such remarks against her, and she continued to be a blessing to the church unmolested.

It was difficult to decide whether her children favored Mamma Doner more than they did their father, or not. The traits of both parents were plainly visible in all the children. We have noticed them in Helen. There was Erwin, two years below Helen in age, a splendid boy. "Just like his father," the men all said; "Just like his mother," the women corrected. Both opinions were justified. He was a manly, go-ahead little fellow, much like his father, but he also had the gentle traits of his mother.

After him came Ralph, "his exact image," everybody said; and he was, only that he was three years younger. Next came Irma, a bright little girl of eight. Last of all came Chester, now only five years old. It was this little fellow that stood on the veranda as Helen came up the walk in such gleeful haste that evening after the meeting.

"What makes you run so?" he asked.

"Oh, I've had such good luck, baby," said Helen. "Don't you remember the papers Cousin Corine and sister were writing yesterday evening? Well, the people at the school all thought they were just right."

"Tourse they was right if you wroten 'em," and Chester walked away to the end of the porch where his big dog Carlo lay stretched out on the rug.

Grandma met Helen in the hall and gave her a kiss. Helen dearly loved old people, especially her grandmother Doner. Grandma had heard Helen tell Chester about the "papers," and she was as much pleased as Helen was. She was wonderfully proud of Helen, this good old grandmother, and never tired of telling people what a fine little woman her grandchild was. She had been quite a scholar herself as a girl, and took a great interest in Helen's school work.

Helen understood what grandma meant by her caress. She put her arm around the old lady's waist and walked toward the library with her.

"Thank you, grandma. Do you know, though, that you are too proud of me?"

"Hush, child; who wouldn't be proud of the finest girl in America?" demanded this doting grandmother.

“Oh, grandma, how can you say such things?” cried Helen. “Is papa at home?”

“Yes, he came early to-day. He is waiting in the library. Supper is all ready. There, I forgot, I was going to call the children in.” She bustled energetically away to get Chester from the veranda and to call in the other three who were playing “camping out” in a tent down by the orchard fence.

The whole family were presently gathered at the tea table. A beautiful picture it was, this happy Christian household, asking the Giver’s blessing on the gifts bestowed, and eating proper food with a relish that showed “a sound mind in a sound body” for each one of them.

Papa Doner allowed the children to talk at the table, wisely recognizing that it is the sociability of the home life that makes it attractive for the child, and believing that the table is as proper a place for sociability as any other can be. He also held that it is a good plan to encourage children to speak freely in the presence of their parents. Besides, he knew that one eats more slowly when the eating is interspersed with conversation, and that slow eating is conducive to health, and health to happiness. So the meal was eaten in a sensible manner, and body, mind, and soul were nourished.

Before arising from the table, the family joined in the evening worship. Then Ralph and Irma "did" the dishes, while Helen and Erwin took a little stroll with papa in the yard. They walked for half an hour, then repaired to the library with him to look over the next day's lessons. Mamma and grandma sat on the veranda with Chester until it grew too chilly, when they joined the others in-doors.

Ralph and Irma were at a game of checkers in the sitting-room adjoining the library. Chester was soon taken to bed. Grandma stayed up stairs with him. Half an hour later mamma took Ralph and Irma to their nests; she did not send them. At nine Helen and Erwin said "good-night." Then papa and mamma had their usual evening chat; "spooning" Helen called it, to tease them. At ten the household was in quietness and at rest.

A simple life it seems, and uneventful. Would God that this world knew more such simple, uneventful home lives, and fewer of these cold, heartless houses, these rough evening street-corner games, these dazzling midnight ball-room excitements, that have meant for so many thousand young souls delusion, disgrace, destruction, despair, damnation.

CHAPTER V.

“THERE IS A REAPER.”

“WHAT hot, dry weather we are having for this time of the year,” said Helen to grandma, a few days later, as she reached home from school in the afternoon. “I wonder if it will ever rain again?”

“Why of course it will,” grandma answered in her positive way. “What makes you think it will not, Helen? Don’t you remember the verse you were teaching Irma last week? ‘The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand.’”

“Yes, but do you know that sometimes bothers me?” answered Helen. “Sometimes we need rain so badly and God lets everything almost burn up, and then again we have so much rain that the crops are damaged, or the seed decays in the ground without germinating. Papa was telling me that a few years ago the farmers had to plant their corn three separate times, because the ground was kept so wet by the continuous rains.”

“My dear child,” replied grandma, “I know there are many people who complain about the weather when it does not exactly suit them, and some who are never satisfied. Your grandfather lived on the farm all his life, just where the weather makes the most difference. I never heard him complain. I used to scold and fret awfully when the weather did not promise us good crops, but he always put on a cheerful face, and would repeat that verse from Deuteronomy. By and by I learned the lesson he knew so well. I want to teach it to you children this minute; but it will take years of life for you to understand it fully. Which of you can tell me what good weather is?”

“Me, gramma,” asserted Chester. “It’s wen the sun shines, an’ I can play on my san’ pile in the yard.”

“Bless his little heart,” said grandma. “But, Chester, if it were always sunshiny and never rained, how could the grass and the apples and the berries and things grow?”

“I doan know,” said he, after a moment’s pause.

“Well, Ralph, you try,” said grandma.

“Well, it’s when we have both,” said the boy; “sometimes rain and sometimes sunshine. Ain’t it?”

“Yes,” said grandma; “but how much rain and how much sunshine does that mean? Some people want more rain and some want more sun. Let us have Helen tell us.”

“I don’t believe I can help much,” said she. “It seems to me that what weather is good for one thing is bad for the other, and what is good for the other is bad for the one. And there’s some that doesn’t seem to be good for anything, isn’t there, grandma? But now, tell us what you think is good weather.”

“Well, children,” said the old lady, and her eyes were dancing merrily, “I’ll tell you. Good weather is the weather that is doing the most people the most good. Now, Helen says some weather seems to do nobody any good. You must not forget what ‘good’ means. It means that which benefits or helps. The ‘most good’ is that which brings the greatest help, or helps in the need of most important things. To have big crops and nice green lawns isn’t the only thing that is good for us. It is sometimes much better for us to have a good dose of hard punishment. Then, what the preachers call ‘trials’ and ‘tests of faith’ are also good for us. Indeed, these two things are generally calculated to help the soul more than the good crops do. As the soul is so

much more important than the body, this kind of weather that shows the soul the anger and displeasure of God is really doing the most good, and therefore it is, at times, the best weather. Just think how little we deserve, and how apt we are to forget to think about God at all when everything goes along to please us. If by this weather only one soul is brought to think of God and His righteous punishments and its own sinfulness, the hot, dry season has done an eternity of good, even if it causes much pain and suffering, or even death. I know some people say that unpleasant weather only hardens godless people all the more against God, but that isn't true. You hear just as much cursing, and see just as much wickedness, and read of just as much crime when the weather is favorable to crops as when it isn't. As for those who are God's children and love Him and believe in Him, they will think these things over, and instead of straying away from Him, they will come to the same conclusion as we are reaching, and will admire the heavenly Father's gracious wisdom all the more. Well, Helen?" and the old lady looked at her granddaughter rather slily.

"It does seem as though it might be that way," answered Helen slowly, "and still it is a little difficult for me to be absolutely certain of it at

once. I'll promise to think it over. I must go up stairs now and wash my hands and get my hair fixed, or I'll not be fit to be seen at the table. My hair just wouldn't stay in shape to-day."

Old Mrs. Doner was not one of those persons who spoil an advantage they have scored in argument by pushing a point too far. She knew that Helen would consider the question fairly and in the light of the Bible. So she did not trouble herself any further about the final conclusion at which Helen would arrive. She dismissed the subject, merely saying to the others, "You children had better be getting yourselves ready for supper too," and went out on the veranda to watch for her son's coming.

You do not know how proud the old lady was of him, her only son. She did not make a "fuss" over him as she did over Helen. It does not seem to be parents' custom to make as much of their own children as they do of their children's children. Mrs. Doner was no exception to this rule. But no woman ever felt more profoundly thankful to God than did this dear old soul for her boy. She watched every detail of his success in business and his rise to a position of trust in the congregation with complete joy and gratefulness.

Mr. Doner was always glad to find her waiting for him when he returned from the office, and in-

variably greeted her with a fond caress, no matter how many people might be passing on the street at the time. No wonder that his ways were attended by the blessings of One who has said, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

The family was just gathering about the tea table, when hurried footsteps were heard without, and the door bell was given a sharp ring. Mrs. Doner herself went to the door. She came in again with a grave expression on her sweet face, and answered their inquiring looks by saying, "It was the servant girl from Mr. Brown's across the way. The old gentleman has been overcome by the heat. I will go over at once. Helen, you may take my place at the table."

"All right, mamma, I will. May I go over to the pastor's after tea to take the baby out in its buggy a while? I know Mrs. Denton is busy canning to-day. It will do Beatrice good to give her a breath of fresh air, don't you think?"

"Why, certainly you may go," said mamma; and, getting her summer hat, for the sun was still in the sky, she hurried across to the neighbor's.

Helen found Mrs. Denton very glad to see her, and to have her take Beatrice out for the ride, as she herself was extremely tired, and Harry had gone

out into the country with his papa to visit a sick parishioner. She did not like to trust Tim out with baby, as he was so young, only eight, and also full of boyish carelessness. Helen took baby a long ride, and the little thing enjoyed it fully.

She was a remarkable child, little Beatrice, with wonderful large brown eyes and lovely golden-brown hair. People on the street would often turn to look at her again after having passed her. Grandma Doner always called her "that beautiful child." She was so good, too, much sweeter than the babies that are commonly called good. She was a little over two years old now, and was learning to talk quite freely. Helen was much amused at her prattle, and baby liked to talk to Helen almost as well as she did to her mamma and papa.

When Helen brought her home, Mrs. Denton was on the lawn before the parsonage, resting after her canning.

"You are looking so bad, Mrs. Denton," said Helen. "You ought to have something to strengthen you. Shall I get you something from the drug-store?"

"O no," answered she. "It's nothing serious; only that I got so tired. My girl left me yesterday, and I had the peaches engaged, so they had to be taken care of. Mr. Denton helped me as

long as he could stay, but he had promised to go into the country, so I had to finish alone. Tim helped me a little. I would have kept Harry, but he is more of a bother than anything else when I get him into the kitchen. Was baby good? And did she enjoy her ride?"

"O yes," said Helen, "only I think she looks a little pale, don't you?"

"Her teeth have been bothering her so," replied Mrs. Denton. "One of her eye-teeth is almost through now, and the other is starting to come down. She has been rather fretful to-day, and did not rest well last night. I do wish this hot dry spell were over."

"Mrs. Denton, you *are* sick, and I'm going to get you some tonic or something at Vance's," cried Helen. She was alarmed at her dear friend's look—pale, and her face set in strained lines.

"No, no," insisted Mrs. Denton, "I am all right. Hush, Helen, don't say anything to them;" for Mrs. Hereford and Corine were driving up in their phaeton. They came in and stayed until Pastor Denton returned from the country, when Corine and her mamma took Helen home.

"How is old Mr. Brown, mamma," she inquired as she entered the house, after bidding her aunt and her cousin "good night."

"Oh, he is much better," returned her mother. "How are the pastor's folks?"

"Baby seemed quite well," said Helen; "only she is teething, and that seems to make her a little fretful, and restless at night. I suppose that is natural this hot weather, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is," agreed her mother quietly. Helen thought she could distinguish tears in her mamma's eyes.

There were tears there. She was thinking of her two babies who had been taken away in just such weather, when the fields were brown and thirsty and the rain would not come. How she had loved those little ones! Even now, blessed as she was, she could not forget them, nor could she keep back her heart's tears as she thought of those first treasures that the Lord had given and the Lord had taken away, and—yes, she had learned to add in sweet faith and humble submission—"blessed be the name of the Lord."

"Was Mrs. Denton feeling quite well?" continued Mrs. Doner. Her words aroused Helen from a thoughtful reverie into which she had fallen.

"Why, that is what is bothering me, mamma. Mrs. Denton did not look at all well. I am afraid she is going to have a spell of sickness. She claimed that it was nothing but the work—her girl

left her yesterday without a moment's warning; wasn't that shameful? She has been canning peaches all day, with nobody to help her except Mr. Denton, and he had to leave early in the afternoon. Why, mamma, she looked as though she might faint." Helen's face wore a look of solicitude and worry that showed plainly how much she loved her dear pastor's wife.

"I'll run over to see her in the morning," said Mrs. Doner.

She did "run over" to the parsonage next morning, before Helen had gone to school, returning with the good news that Mrs. Denton was feeling quite well and that baby seemed happy and healthy. So Helen, with a great load lifted from her heart, went to school, and after school with Corine to do a little shopping. When she reached home grandma met her on the walk.

"Helen, dear," she said, and her manner made Helen know that something grave had happened, "your mamma has just been called over to the parsonage. Baby Beatrice has had spasms."

Oh, how still Helen's heart stood while grandma was telling her this; and then she could not speak a word. She clung to grandma, and sobbed as if her heart were breaking. Her grandmother let her cry a while, and then tried to assure her.

“Helen, you must not think it is as bad as that. Why, your aunt Lena had seven spasms in thirty-six hours, and see what a strong woman she is to-day. So many children have spasms, you know, and they recover and get along all right.”

A faint smile of hope stole through Helen's tears as she said: “O grandma, do you think she can get better?”

And grandma answered, “There is no reason to suppose that she shouldn't. Now, run up to your room and cool your face and wash your eyes, and don't forget that our prayers will help more than the doctor's skill.”

When Beatrice had fallen into spasms, Harry had run over to the Doners' as fast as his feet would carry him. Mrs. Doner had hurried to the parsonage without a second's delay, arriving there before the baby had recovered. The pastor and his wife were so much alarmed and distracted that they did not know what to do. Mrs. Doner put warm cloths at little Beatrice's feet, and cool bandages about her forehead, and soon the convulsions ceased and baby rested quietly on her mamma's lap.

In an hour or so she seemed to have recovered quite. Her papa took her up on his shoulder and carried her about the room, stopping, as he

was accustomed to do with her, to make a call on each one of the pictures that hung on the walls. She knew them all and smiled, and, although she was tired and weaker than usual, they felt certain that she would be entirely herself again in the morning.

The doctor had been there soon after baby recovered from the spasm. He had told them not to be needlessly alarmed, and had left medicine, promising to step in again early next morning to see how his little patient had fared during the night.

Meantime Harry had run up to Doners' with the good news that baby was “all right now.” Helen felt that her prayers had been answered already, and was so happy. She wanted to go over to the pastor's, but grandma thought she had better not that evening, as it would be best not to excite little Beatrice, but to let her have a good night's rest. So Helen contented herself with waiting until morning.

Mr. Doner had gone over immediately after supper, and at eight he and mamma returned, saying that baby had been put into bed and was sleeping sweetly.

Next morning Helen went to the parsonage with rather a fearful heart, but found that Beatrice had

rested well and showed no effects of her previous day's illness other than being irritable and fretful, which, the doctor had said, was quite natural.

The following day baby was the same, and the third day Mrs. Denton brought her up to the Doners' in her little cab. She played with the children, and when she grew tired sat on her mother's lap laughing with them. Next morning, however, she was strangely drowsy, and had a sudden weak spell, but she rallied from that again and fell into a sound sleep. She slept during the greater part of that day and of the next, but again the kind and attentive doctor assured them that it was only natural that she should want a long rest after her three days of nervousness and irritableness.

After that there were several days when she seemed better, but not her natural self. One evening they took her out for a drive. She always liked to go with Prince and the buggy, but she did not seem to care for the ride. Then again the next morning she seemed much better, and Mrs. Denton said, "Papa, baby is better to-day; she is poking holes in mamma's face;" baby having a habit of pushing her little forefinger into her mamma's cheek. But after breakfast that morning Beatrice had so sudden and severe a sick spell

that they were all alarmed again. Mrs. Denton's mother was telegraphed for, and arrived at noon on the following day.

Baby had by this time sunk into a sort of stupor, but seemed better again when her grandma came. Then followed the saddest days the family had ever lived. Sometimes Beatrice seemed to notice them, but oftener they gathered around to see her die.

How fervently they prayed! Pastor Denton thought he had never known before what it was to pray. But the answer did not seem to come.

“Papa,” Mrs. Denton would say when they would seek the other room for a few minutes' rest from their long watching, “hasn't God promised to hear when we pray?”

“Yes,” the strong man would falter.

“Well, why doesn't he make baby better? I have prayed so earnestly.”

Then this suffering pastor, so sadly in need of consolation himself, would summon all the grace of God that was within him, and explain to her and himself that God hears only those prayers that are spoken in faith, that is, spoken in perfect trust of Jesus, but also in the spirit of Jesus—in that spirit that said, “Nevertheless, not my will, Father, but Thine be done;” and that even if God

took their baby from them, their prayers had been heard and answered. And then the strong spirit would give way, and he would lean his head upon his wife's shoulder and weep, not tears of doubt and bitterness, but tears of inexpressible sadness, which in God's sight were more precious than matchless pearls.

Yes, God heareth prayer; and "behold, before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." But ah, it is sometimes years before we open our souls to receive the messengers that stand without, bearing the King's message, His answer to our cry.

The Dentons often wondered afterwards what they would have done without the kindness of the Doners. Mrs. Denton would not allow Helen to leave her. She wanted her there day and night; and Helen stayed. Mrs. Doner was there every day almost all the day; and Mr. Doner left his office more than once to go up with a sad heart to comfort a heart still sadder. On him the pastor leaned, from him heard the sweet consolation that he was wont to impart to others. And these two men, children of the only faith that can in truth touch the human soul, in the somber shadows of this hour of trial were knit the closer to each other in a love "wonderful, passing the love of

women,” and drawn the nearer within that heavenly circle that is called “the peace of God which passeth all understanding,” and which “shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Corine and her mother also came to the parsonage quite often, and kindly offered to do anything in their power for the pastor's. But, somehow, they felt themselves rather out of place. They did not seem so to the others, but they felt that there was some reason why they were not really reaching those sad hearts. They said nothing to each other, but often, as they drove home, Mrs. Hereford was thinking, “Why can't I be like Emma Doner?” and Corine was thinking, “What is there about Helen that makes her seem so much better than I am?”

Slowly those weary days dragged on, and hope was fast disappearing. Four days had passed since Beatrice had fallen into that dull stupor, that was not sleeping nor yet waking. That afternoon the doctor came in and looked at her gums again, for the fever had been caused directly by the slow eye-tooth. Hope rose in his heart, battling against his almost certain knowledge that she could not live. “Doctors do not always know,” he thought, “and God Almighty has done far stranger things

than this would be." If Doctor Rich had ever wished that a life entrusted to his care might be spared, it was here in Beatrice's sickness. He had loved her since the gray morning when she came like a beam of sunshine. He had so high a regard for Pastor and Mrs. Denton that he would have given much to have been able to spare them the pain of losing the brightness of this sunbeam that was blessing their home and their lives.

"The tooth is almost through," he cried; and, at the risk of being thought unprofessional—there are always people standing ready to accuse a doctor of making mistakes, and Doctor Rich knew that Mrs. Picketts, a next-door neighbor who had come in, was one of these—he produced his surgical case and touched the white, stretched gum with the sharp edge of a knife. It parted at the lightest touch, and the doctor sighed as he said, "Now, if she could only sleep."

They all grew more hopeful then. Baby had always loved to hear her papa play and sing for her. Now mamma thought if anything on their part could soothe her to sleep, it would be papa's music and papa's voice. So the piano was opened and papa sang, "Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling," and "Lead me gently home, Father," hymns baby had heard him sing so often, herself

sitting on his knee and tapping the keys with him. It was a touching scene, the helpless babe lying there so sweet and lovely, but oh, so tired and weary, papa trying to sing firmly and steadily, and the hushed group of silent watchers, touched by the sweetness of the music, hoping that baby's eyes would close. But slumber would not come, and sadly Pastor Denton closed the lid of the instrument.

Hope died away once more, and the heart-broken watchers watched, while softly and tenderly Jesus was calling, and the Father gently led the little wanderer home. No more of life's toils for sweet Beatrice; the parting days had come, she would never fall upon the wayside, the Father held her safe forever.

There was no wild scene of frantic, shrieking grief. One sob broke the stillness. “Oh, what has God done?” And the mother took her baby's lifeless form into her lap, as though she would soothe it and rock it carefully to sleep.

They left her there alone, with her babe in her arms; and in that hour God took her grief-stricken soul into His arms, and soothed her burning temples, and lulled her rebelling heart into the quiet slumber of His infinite peace.

The funeral service was held at St. Luke's on

Sunday. "All things work together for good to them that love God," was the text the speaker had chosen. Touchingly and comfortingly he showed how little Beatrice's death would in due season prove to have worked for good to her bereaved parents, refining their hearts and minds "as by fire," creating in them a truer, purer, more enlightened faith and trust in God; and how her death would also prove a bearer of God's blessing to the congregation, in that the experience their pastor had received of the Father's mercy in this sad affliction would be felt by them in his future ministrations in the homes of the sick and dying, of the forsaken and distressed.

Baby's grave was not made at Riverton. In the quiet country church-yard near Edgewood, Mrs. Denton's girlhood's home, they laid Beatrice's weary little body to rest.

Pastor Denton absented himself from his charge only a week; when, in the strength of God, he returned, and quietly took up his work again.

So the dainty blossoms fall, "the flowers that grow between," gathered in by God's reaper. But "he will give them all back again;" and will not heaven be all the lovelier, because our little ones will be with us there, those whom the Christ has called "these little ones that believe on me?"

CHAPTER VI.

SOME YOUNG FOLKS' DOINGS.

THE winter that followed little Beatrice's death was a very busy one for Helen, and a still busier one for John Perkins. It is true that the High School teachers at Riverton had not at that time adopted the quite appropriately named "cramming process" that is in vogue to so alarming an extent in our days. They did not assign enormous lessons to their classes, and in addition plague and pester them with myriads of wise trifles and gewgaws during the recitations. Perhaps they were not tempted so severely as is the teacher of to-day.

Nowadays scholars are so ambitious to excel, and parents are so anxious to make a show of their children, that the teacher is compelled to shift in some way to satisfy the demand. Parents do not ask, "What kind of a musical training is my child receiving?" They ask, "How many pieces can my girl play?" They do not feel proud of any mind-training that their boys are getting. Their

great vanity is: "My boy knows a heap;" and, unknown to them, the word "heap" expresses it exactly.

Riverton was happy in the selection of its Board of Education, and this Board was, as a rule, happy in its selection of instructors. Their idea seemed to be to strengthen the mind rather than to fill it; to send it out well equipped for prospecting and mining hidden treasures, rather than to overload it with cheap trinkets; to lay in it a good foundation for independent study, rather than to bolster it up with other people's beams and trusses. The result was that even if the pupils did not have so much showy knowledge as some do to-day, they did have a great deal more of real wisdom. Besides this, they were not exhausted and driven into nervousness and weakness by the constant strain of over-work and worry, while on the other hand, they still had enough to do.

In addition to her school work, Helen had her Catechism to study. Pastor Denton taught it in such a way as to lead his catechumens to take a lively interest in the doctrines of Scripture. This interest did not allow them to be satisfied with a mere learning of the text of the Catechism, but urged them on into studying their Bibles and the Church history.

The pastor also gave them the privilege of making a circulating library of his books, and the scholars, especially the older ones, made diligent use of the opportunity so given them.

It rather aggravated Corine to find Helen so interested in her approaching confirmation.

"Who would have thought you'd ever be one of these old, musty theologians, Nellie," she was pouting one day, when she found Helen poring over a History of the Reformation. "Of course I always knew you were as religious as a dozen preachers, but I never thought you would ever become such a student as all this. Put your book away, and talk to me."

"Why, certainly, Corine; I'm so glad you've come. Where in the world have you been keeping yourself these days?"

"Oh, mamma has been taking me along to quite a few meetings here lately. Do you know, Nellie, it's really interesting to hear them talk about what women could be and ought to be? I've been reading a great deal about it, too,

"Is that the reason you have missed Sunday-school so often of late?" demanded Helen, interrupting her.

"Well, maybe it is," assented Corine; "but—why, Helen, what makes you look so amused?"

"Oh, I was just thinking of saying that of course I always knew you were as far advanced as a dozen brand-new female agitators, but I never thought you would ever become such a woman's rights girl as all that;" and Helen, laughing merrily, put her book down and pulled her cousin on her lap and looked archly into her eyes.

Corine was compelled to "acknowledge the corn;" but she did not care much, as it was only Helen who had cornered her.

"I guess you are about right," she allowed, "but it's all mamma's fault."

"Plus her daughter's entire willingness," added Helen. "But say, Corine, let's take a little walk down toward the mill office to meet papa. If we get there too soon we can go up the river a piece in the Oyster and gather some hazel-nuts. What do you say? I believe I really ought to get out into the air a little more."

"That will be fine, Nellie; but before I stir a step out of this room I want you to tell me why you are continually reading those dry, uninteresting books you get at the pastor's."

"If you only knew how interesting they are, you would not only not wonder why I read them, but you would be reading them yourself. You don't know how much you are missing by declin-

ing to join our class. It seems to me more interesting this year than ever before."

It was the first time Helen had alluded to the subject since their talk that day going home from school. She wondered what was making it so easy to say as much as she did. She felt that she had been quite bold. Corine rewarded her boldness by saying, "Well, I wish I could think about those things as you do," and Helen was sure that Corine's voice was unusually earnest. Corine had, as we have seen, generally dismissed this subject in so matter-of-fact a fashion that Helen always felt hurt.

Noticing the change in Corine's manner, she felt a strange sensation of pleasure, a pleasure that always comes with approaching success, and all the more surely when this success is crowning an effort in a cause dear and near to the heart. With a rare tact of which she herself was not conscious she simply answered:

"Well, perhaps you will, by and by. Now just wait until I get my hat and gloves, and we'll start. Do you think I'll need my jacket?"

"Better take it to be on the safe side; I brought mine."

Helen got her things and put them on mechanically. She was thinking again of that sermon the

pastor had preached just before Beatrice's death. That brought thoughts of Beatrice and of her death. She remembered now, what she had not taken particular notice of at the time, how deeply moved Corine had seemed while listening to the sermon at Beatrice's funeral. She wondered whether Beatrice's death had been God's means of reaching Corine's cold heart.

As the two cousins were going down the walk, a wagon dashed by with so brisk an air of business that their attention was attracted to it. Two boys sat on the seat; one was waving his hand at them.

"Well, I declare, there is John Perkins, and he has a brand-new wagon," exclaimed Corine. "He must be doing a good business. Just think what a large family they have! I don't see how he could afford a new wagon already."

"It isn't new, it's the old one painted over," explained Helen. "And do you know, Corine, he painted it all himself? He told me about it. I don't know how much he saved, but he told me just how much it was in dollars and cents. He borrowed an old wagon of a neighbor while he was painting this one. Doesn't it look nice? Did you notice what the lettering was, Corine?"

"Yes. It was 'Perkins' Merchants' Delivery.' I wonder whether he did that himself, too?"

“Yes, he did. He did the whole thing. Papa says that John is one of the finest boys in town, and that he has more business in him than a great many business men he knows. I never told you, Corine—papa didn’t tell me, either, till just a few days ago—but when Mr. Perkins died papa offered John a situation in the elevator. Mr. John declined to take it. Why? Because he suspected something, and asked papa whether he really needed him, or was giving him a position only to help him along. You know how honest papa is, and what a poor hand he is at pretending anything. There wasn’t a particle of necessity to have any more help at the elevator, as our papas always keep as many hands employed as they possibly can, whether they are busy with orders or not. Papa tried to blunder out an explanation of some sort, and that settled it. Sensitive Mr. John ‘must thankfully decline’ papa’s offer under the circumstances. But papa seemed to like him all the better for his independence, and I am sure that I have not noticed that I like him any less myself.”

“Well, I should think not,” responded her cousin. “He’s the kind of boy I prefer to all others. I know he is poor and humble; but compare him with that snippy Willie Seeler, or with

that dandified Rob Hoodley,—O dear, Helen, did you ever think how few boys there are that a person really can respect? 'There's Posey Berner, she thinks Willie Seeler is the finest boy that ever was; when there's not that much in him,' as she snapped her fingers disdainfully.

"Well, there are at least three good boys in the class," returned Helen. "Tom Green is a nice boy, and Jim Stevens is nice, and on John we have agreed already. You mustn't be too severe on the other boys. They are young yet, and will have a long time to 'brace up' and make their marks in the world."

The boys were all so loyal to Helen that she had a soft spot in her heart for all of them.

Corine was not so easily convinced, however, and rejoined:

"Of course you like them all, Nellie, and they all like you. But mark my word, Willie and Rob and Hal Lee will never set the world on fire. Tom and Jim are good enough, but John is so far beyond them that I hadn't thought of them at all. What a hard worker he must be, to get along as he does."

They had reached the office by this time. Mr. Doner was not ready to leave, as he had an appointment with a traveling business man half an

hour later, and would be at least half an hour transacting business with him. The girls decided to take their contemplated trip while waiting for him.

The Oyster was a neat little row-boat that Uncle Joe had given to Erwin and Ralph the preceding summer. It was kept at the mill. Mr. Doner put it into the water for them and saw them off. They were both good rowers, and, exhilarated by the fresh October air, they glided swiftly up the river and around the bend.

Corine had judged John Perkins correctly when she said, "What a hard worker he must be." He was a harder worker than many people knew. His friends supposed that he applied himself very diligently. His instructors believed that he was the greatest worker in the school. But only his mother knew how much he really had on his young shoulders. John was keeping up with his class at High School, was helping Paul with the delivering in the mornings and evenings, and was, at the same time, general superintendent and book-keeper of all the family's affairs. He himself did not know how much he was really doing. For, as has often been said, and, what is more, as often proven, when one's heart and interest are in his work he has no thought of its hardships; and

when the heart is not continually fretting and grumbling about the work, the body is better able to accomplish its duties.

John did not show any signs of wearing out. His face did not look worried, his back was not becoming bent, he had a good appetite and slept well, his color was good, and he seemed to grow stronger and more broad-shouldered every day. He was a splendid example to set before lazy young men, who always excuse themselves on the ground that they "couldn't stand work as hard as that." Perhaps if we had more such examples, we might have less such lazy young men, and having less such lazy young men we certainly would have more such examples. In the meantime let us all hope that this ratio of increase and decrease may soon begin to operate extensively.

John's folks had not been a family of churchgoers when they came to Riverton. They were now among the most faithful attendants at St. Luke's. Mr. Doner had become acquainted with Mr. Perkins one winter when he came to the mill asking for work during the cold months. As was his custom with his employés, he had inquired as to Mr. Perkins' church connections, and, finding that he had none, had invited him to St. Luke's.

Mr. Perkins paid little attention to the invita-

tion, and kept on leading the old life. It was a common thing to see him with his wife and children out in the gardens on Sundays hoeing and raking and planting and gathering as though Sunday were anything else but God's day of prayer and preaching. His winter Sundays he spent in the house with his newspapers. He said that he could be just as decent a man without the church as he could be with the church, and that he was a great deal better than many people who go to church regularly. It was the old argument, that because there are hypocrites in the church the church itself is of no value at all. In other words, there would be no value in a ninety per cent. gold mine, because the ore contained ten per cent. of quartz.

Mr. Perkins had everything his own way with this fine theory of the church and her membership until the next winter, when he and his wife were both taken down sick. Mr. Doner heard of their plight and went out to their cottage immediately, and inquired carefully into their condition and needs. He left, wishing them a speedy recovery with God's help. They had been rather surprised at having this rich man call on them, but their surprise was turned into utter bewilderment when, an hour after his departure, a goodly quan-

tity of provisions arrived for them, with no other explanation than that given by the delivery man, that Mr. Doner had ordered them sent out in haste.

While they were yet directing the children where to put the contents of the packages, there was a knock at the door, and a gentleman announcing himself as Dr. Rich entered, and proceeded to examine into their sickness without further ceremony. Upon their protestations that they had not sent for him and that they were not able to pay any doctor's bills, he simply told them not to worry, that that would be all right. On their objections that they did not need any doctor, as they had taken only a little cold in their limbs, he said, "You'll find that inflammatory rheumatism is not so easily shaken off. I'll send you some medicine at once. The directions will be on the bottles. Be sure you use the medicine regularly, and exactly as I write on the labels."

The next morning quite early three well-dressed women called. They not only called, but also made themselves agreeable and useful. They chatted pleasantly with the sick, cleaned up the kitchen and the dishes, tidied up the house generally, made the children appear presentable, and went away, leaving the house looking like a dif-

ferent place, and the inhabitants feeling like different people. John had been doing the housework, and at that time was only ten years old.

That same afternoon a trunk was brought, and before they had succeeded in guessing what it meant, a young girl arrived, saying that she was glad her trunk had reached there safe, and that she had come to stay until they got better. On being asked who sent her, she said, the ladies of St. Luke's church.

The rheumatism kept the Perkinses company for eight weeks. During these eight weeks Jonathan Perkins had done some busy thinking. The pastor had called often and had helped his thoughts along. So it happened that on the first Sunday on which they were able to be up and about, Jonathan said to his wife, "Frances, s'pose we go down to the church to-day."

Frances had plainly been doing some thinking for herself, for she consented with unexpected alacrity. At the appointed time the whole family marched into St. Luke's. There they were received by the ushers, who were not only polite but likewise pious, were treated as respectfully as though they had been the Hoodleys, and were impressed very favorably with all they heard and saw. Soon after this they all joined the church.

Mr. Doner never ceased taking a special interest in them. It was through his leniency as holder of the mortgage against their little home place that they were enabled to keep it during their trying times.

Naturally, Mr. Perkins always asked Mr. Doner's advice on his affairs. In regard to John's confirmation the deacon had advised him to wait, so John had not been confirmed until the spring before his father's death. He had at once joined the Young People's Society, and was its president. He had also been made an assistant usher of the church.

It was about this same identical John the girls were again talking as they curved around the river bend in their boat—that is, however, not about him alone, but about the boys at school in general. What made them come back to that subject perhaps only the smooth surface of the river and the gentle motion of the boat could have explained. At any rate, as all young girls will do, they approached the subject that has always interested all the world, and always will.

These two girls had usually hitherto talked freely to each other about their school-boy sweet-hearts, but when Helen suddenly cried, "Corine, which one of the boys at school do you like best?" Corine had blushed and looked out over the river.

Corine was rowing, Helen was guiding the boat with the rudder. As Corine looked across the water she saw a way out of her dilemma.

"O Nellie," she cried, not paying any attention to her cousin's question, "see what lovely, large hazel-nuts there are on those bushes in the field over there! Let's get some of them. There they are, right near that clump of hickory trees. Why don't you guide the boat in?"

"I will not guide it there," persistently pulling the wrong rudder-rope when Corine tried to direct the boat in by using only one oar, "until you have answered my question."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," proposed the inventive Corine. "I have some of mamma's visiting cards with me, and a little pencil. You take a card, and I'll take one, and we'll each write on her card the name of the boy that she likes best, and then exchange cards with each other, and agree not to read them till we get home this evening. What do you say?"

Helen thought it a fine plan, so the cards were produced, and written and exchanged with a great amount of fun, and then put carefully away into the jacket-pockets. After that Helen could steer the boat to the shore with her "mind at rest," as she expressed it with a mock sigh. They gathered

the hazel-nuts, skipped stones across the water, and enjoyed themselves generally as two sensible, healthy girls would do.

When they reached the mill again, Mr. Doner was still engaged with the visitor. They sat down in the outer office to wait for him. Presently the two gentlemen came out from the inner desk-room. Helen's father introduced the stranger to the girls. He was an elderly man, but seemed as strong and spry as a young soldier. His name was Chamberlain. He was very distinguished-looking, which recommended him highly to both the girls. He soon left, however, and they set out for home. Corine left the others at the first corner.

As they were walking home, Helen's father explained to her that the stranger was an Englishman to whom they sometimes shipped grain, and that he would be at the house to take tea with them. Mr. Chamberlain duly appeared. He proved himself a very agreeable visitor. He took a remarkable fancy to Helen, saying that he had once had a little girl of just about her age and size. As for Helen, she was quite fascinated with her new acquaintance.

When he left at nine o'clock, and she was ready to go upstairs, she suddenly remembered Corine's card. She hurried to the cloak-room to get it from

her jacket-pocket, and read, "John Perkins," underscored with three lines. She laughed aloud.

As soon as she reached her home, Corine had gone to her room to read Helen's card. What she read was this, "John Perkins." So she had her laugh first.

When they met at school the next Monday the first thing the girls did was to have another good girls' laugh together. Then they wished each other success and much joy. How could they be jealous, these sweet girl natures? If only all of us were as free from jealousy as they were.

CHAPTER VII.

CONFIRMATION.

As the Christmas holidays approached, our young people were busier than ever, for in addition to their usual work there came the Christmas preparations. Several of the girls were heard declaring that they did not see how they ever could get through; but in spite of that they did get through, and they all looked the better for having had the blessed busy holidays, as they stood, on this first day of the new term, talking and laughing before the school bell was tapped for recitations.

After school Helen said to Corine :

“Better go along with me to lecture. I know it will be interesting for you to-day.”

To her delight Corine agreed. While the other girls remained, chatting and comparing vacation notes, these two proceeded to the lecture-room at St. Luke's. Corine was taken completely by surprise. At first she glanced around rather critically, especially at the younger catechumens; but

her critical spirit deserted her when the pastor opened with prayer. His words were so simple and direct that to Corine it seemed as if God must be standing near to listen. When the short prayer, for God's guidance and His blessing on the children, was ended, it seemed to her that if God had any heart at all He could not refuse to grant what had been asked. When the children began to sing, she was inclined to think that God had already granted the prayer, for they rendered the sweet little song with a joyful spirit that was infectious. Ere Corine knew it, she was looking on the book with Helen and singing too.

Then followed the lesson. It was explained clearly and practically. Corine was positively delighted. It did not require the interested faces of the pupils to show her that each one understood the doctrine and its proofs and its importance.

As they were going home after a pleasant little chat with the pastor, Corine said :

"Helen, you once told me that your pastor said something about the Holy Spirit's coming to children who are only thirteen years old, and making things clear to them. I think he should have said that the Holy Ghost comes to him, and he makes things clear to the children."

"Doesn't he explain things the loveliest?" said

Helen, with eyes glistening. "I only wish you would let him explain all your doubts and your stubbornness away."

"So do I," added Corine; but she did nothing more to make it possible for the pastor to help her realize her wish. This was Corine's great trouble. She would feel impulses in the right direction, but would not act on them while they were strong enough to move her; and, when they weakened or disappeared, she was the same girl as she had been before they tried to persuade her. What a struggle it always is to get away from the wrong! Corine's struggle was all the harder because she rejected every assistance that the merciful Father granted her.

Under Pastor Denton's care the class made good progress. It had not seemed a long and tiresome task, when one day he announced, "Well, we have now reached the end of the Catechism, and will begin reviewing." The review was, if anything, more interesting than the first course had been. Pentecost drew nearer and nearer, and the children began to feel sorry that the time when they would no longer meet as a class was so close at hand.

They were to be publicly examined on the Sunday before Pentecost. When this Sunday dawned

fair and bright the class were correspondingly glad, for, in spite of their excitement at appearing before the congregation for examination, they all wanted the church to be filled. They had their wish, as every seat in the large auditorium was occupied, and, in addition, every chair in the commodious Sunday-school room adjoining.

The pastor conducted the examination in the sensible and interesting manner in which he had always conducted the recitations and lectures. The examination was thorough, taking up over an hour's time, but was so carried on as to prove interesting to all. The pastor's method put the children entirely at their ease, and they answered his questions readily, and with conviction. There was no unnecessary quizzing and puzzling, only a straight-forward questioning along the lines of the chief doctrines of the Bible, as confessed by the church. When it was over there was no need of drawing a long sigh of relief, although naturally the children all felt somewhat relieved.

Pentecost Sunday dawned gray and cloudy, and hundreds of hearts were filled with disappointment. About nine o'clock, however, the clouds and the disappointment began to disperse. By half-past nine the sky was clear and bright. Again the church was thronged with people.

The service was all sacredness and solemnity. The pastor had impressed upon the children a sense of the earnestness and importance of the occasion. And, although the girls were not unmindful of their appearance in their new white and cream dresses, with flowers from the greenhouse, and hair dressed particularly prettily, nor the boys of their new suits and neckties, still they had been sufficiently impressed all through the course of lectures with the importance of this day; so it was not easy for them to forget, and they bore themselves with due propriety and seriousness.

Reverend Denton had not considered it beneath his dignity to rehearse with the class their procession into the church, their division at the chancel, their approach and kneeling at the altar, their acceptance of "the right hand of Christian fellowship and love," and all the other details of the beautiful ceremony. He believed that, in due respect to God and the dignity of the church and the import of the occasion, beauty in the services was demanded. In his mind he had never been able to associate beauty with awkwardness and hitching and halting. His idea on this point was also carried out in his own bearing at the altar. He did not strut about like a lecturer on a plat-

form, nor did he comport himself with the stiffness of an automaton, but moved to and fro as though himself impressed by the fact that "the Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him and worship Him."

Worshiping God meant much at St. Luke's, and was such as to impress the beholder, not with an idea that the worshipers believed in forms for forms' sake, but with the feeling that God was truly nigh, and it beseemed not to approach Him without reverence.

Tears filled many eyes at that confirmation service: the entrance of the class, led slowly down the wide aisle by the pastor, solemnly chanting a processional to the music of the great organ's softest stops, the pastor's deep bass mingling with the clear treble of boys' voices in the alto and the girls' sweeter voices in a beautiful soprano; the well-timed arrival at the chancel just as the class had reached the end of the chant; the precise and graceful division into two lines, exactly conforming to the two rows of chairs provided; the instant transition of the organ into a burst of Pentecostal music.

It came suddenly like "a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." The singers at

the organ arise as if by one consent, and with the marvelous melody of the organ's soul unite the music of their Christian souls, moved by the Spirit of God. The welling waves of sounding praise sweep triumphant over the gathered concourse, then onward and upward into the arched dome that crowns the vaulted ceiling. From thence, renewed in power, they descend again, to join with their own selves in showering blessings on the waiting multitudes beneath.

And then sonorous hallelujahs echo away, rolling among the distant architraves, and in their train come softer strains, breathing the soothing fellowship of the Comforter "whom I will send unto you from the Father."

Over the hushed stillness of the sacred scene falls heaven's light, mellowed by soft colors in the rich windows, of which each one revealed from the life of the Christ a scene as dear and touching as those shown in the others.

Here in the altar recess He stood, the Good Shepherd, gathering the lambs with His arms and carrying them in His bosom, His countenance grave, tender, full of pity, loving beyond expression.

Here to the right, in the large main window, He stood again, the Holy Child, receiving adora-

tion in the clouds of heaven from the angels; they praising Him, making joyful noises with psaltery and harp, with timbrels and loud cymbals, while He himself receives their adoration, the Child-figure erect, the face bright with divinity, yet sad and earnest with contemplation of a sorrow that is soon to be realized, for "surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Meet indeed it is that to this Man of Sorrows, whom men rejected and despised, angels should sing their loftiest praises.

The music has changed again. Joyful notes of praise are gladdening all the house :

"Let songs of praises fill the sky,
Christ, our ascended Lord,
Sends down His Spirit from on high
According to His Word.
All hail the day of Pentecost,
The coming of the Holy Ghost."

The rapturous voices seem to leap exultingly through space to reach with greetings yonder throng of heaven's host in the large window at the rear. Above, a night-sky, darkened by thick, gray clouds. In the midst, a burst of light; "and lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid." There they are be-

neath, in the lower panels of that glorious painting, shepherds, quaking with fear, yet chained to the spot, entranced, they know not by what. Sheep-flocks are hurrying, frightened, away. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God." You see them now, numberless light-winged angel hosts, each cloud in the vast picture bearing its group of heavenly spirits. Their voices, all uniting, seem to join with the ecstatic song of Whitsuntide the transporting strains of that first Christmas night, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Again the anthem changes. It is pleading now:

"Oh, Christ, that blessedst the children of earth,
Thy Spirit descend upon us."

And see, yonder rests the way-worn Jesus, yonder, in the beautiful window in the school-room—rests by the wayside, on the well-curb, where sheep are slaking their thirst. "And they brought young children to Jesus, that He should touch them." And Jesus is saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

Oh, that we all were little children, born again of the blessed Pentecostal Spirit—that no sin, no Satan, no bane of earth or hell, might forbid us to come to Jesus!

The music is ceasing,—nay, 'tis not. For it is naught else than music, this melodious voice, the introit of the service, “This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it: we will come before His presence with thanksgiving, and enter into His courts with praise.”

The responsive service, joined in by the whole congregation, is veritably inspiring. Through the souls of the assembled worshipers there passes that feeling of awe that had filled Jacob's soul when he said, “How dreadful is this place: this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

On the altar service follows a hymn by the congregation, one of those soul-inspiring hymns in the possession of which the Lutheran church is so rich and so powerful. At its close the pastor appears in the pulpit. He speaks:

“My dear children: As a remembrance of this, the day of your confirmation, each one of you will receive at the hands of the church a sealed and written testimony of his or her reception into the full participation of all the spiritual privileges that belong to the church as being the body of Christ. These rolls of parchment should mean much to you. They will remind you of the days you have spent in the study of God's Word; of the doctrines

and directions, the comforts and promises, that you have found in that inexhaustible treasury ; of the vows that you have made this day ; of the glory of the Kingdom of Grace, the Christian church, whose adult members you become to-day. There is about them, however, one special feature to which I would direct your attention. This is the so-called memory verse, a verse of the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever, adorning each one of these perishable leaves. These certificates may be defaced, lost, destroyed, and your names still remain written in heaven. But if the truth, of which these passages of Scripture are a part, be effaced from your hearts, then all is lost for you forever. My dear children, that should not be. That must not be. That dare not be. May God's Holy Spirit, whose outpouring we celebrate this day, descend upon you and me, aiding me to give, and you to receive, these words so deep into your souls, that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate" you "from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

Then addressing each child separately and individually, he reads to it the Scripture text of its

certificate, and speaks to its soul a few well-chosen words of explanation, advice, good cheer, and warning. Not a word is addressed directly to the congregation, but nevertheless not a soul is in all that house but feels itself personally bespoken for faith in Jesus and obedience to God's law.

After this address there is a hymn, sung by the class of catechumens; then the earnest questions: "Do you renounce?"—"Do you believe?"—"Do you promise?"—answered in sincerity and with understanding. The class kneel down before the altar of the Lord. The organ breathes a soft, almost inaudible accompaniment, while the pastor, with laying on of hands of blessing, pronounces a benediction on each child.

The class arise. With a few more words of fatherly love and solicitude the pastor distributes their certificates to them. The right hand of fellowship is extended, and is grasped in a response that is as hearty as its giving. A hymn of thanks and praise ascends to God from the hearts of the confirmed.

The closing service, as impressive as the opening, ensues, ending with a benediction pronounced with so evident a fervency that each hearer feels its power as a real benison, and, with a joyous doxology from all the congregation, the Pentecostal

confirmation service is over. Truly, it was another outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

After the service the class were surrounded by friends and well-wishers, some laughingly congratulating, others devoutly blessing them. Let us hope that they will all be faithful unto death and receive the crown of life.

Corine's few words to Helen made her happier than those of all the others. She had waited until all the others had spoken to Helen. Then she came and took her arm, and led her toward the door. "O Nellie," she said, "it was so sweet;" and the tears filled her eyes, and a sob choked in her throat, and she said no more. Helen seemed to understand, and said nothing.

They stopped a moment at the parsonage to get Helen's things. Then, arm in arm, they walked silently to Helen's home, where they were all to dine that day.

On Trinity Sunday the class participated in their first communion, and thus their real life as full church members was begun, a life that should mean to each and every one, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

What would their lives be? God grant that we

may one day meet them all kneeling about the golden altar that is before the throne, there to receive the everlasting confirmation of "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne," the Lamb which "shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MIDDLELERS.

Nothing of note happened to the class of '81, R. H. S., during their first year. They all made steady progress, with the exception, perhaps, of Rob Hoodley and Posey Berner.

Posey was rather a careless girl, not gifted highly enough to allow of her being careless if she wished her marks to be good, and still possessed of a plenty of mental power to keep abreast of the others if she only applied herself.

Rob Hoodley's trouble was that he had always been pampered and petted too much. His father's money had always made things easy for him, but everybody knows that there is no royal road to learning. So Rob's money was of no help to him in getting his lessons. He might have hired a "coach," but he was too honorable for that, not having forgotten the pledge he had signed. Indeed, Rob would not have stooped to that means, even had he not signed the class resolutions. Still the pledge did help him in remaining upright.

Helen had stated the case correctly at that first class-meeting, when she said that they would not do right merely because they had pledged themselves, yet the pledge would remind them of their duties.

Rob had got along through school so far by taking several of the grades twice. When he got into the High School he did not know what to do. He floundered about, neither sinking nor swimming, barely keeping himself afloat.

One evening as Corine and Helen and Fannie were leaving the school-yard, some one called out behind them, "Hold on there, girls!"

They all three faced about like soldiers expecting the attack of an enemy. It was Jim Stevens' voice that had startled them. He was hurrying along as fast as he well could. Tom Green and John Perkins were with him.

"Come back here. We want to talk to you," continued Jim, as they came up to the girls. They all stepped inside again, and Jim led the way to an inviting maple-tree, where the girls sat down among the autumn leaves on a rustic bench, and the boys found seats on the grass.

"Well, what's this all about?" demanded Fannie. "I'm all curiosity to hear."

Jim looked at Tom, and Tom looked at Jim, and

they both looked at John, and John looked from one to the other, and then they all three burst out into a comical laugh.

"I'll bet it's one of Tom Green's jokes," broke in Fannie. "If it is, I'm going to leave this moment." She began to gather up her books to emphasize her threat.

"Don't do that, Fannie," Jim begged. "It's like this. We've got something to say, and we don't know how to say it."

"Yes, we do," said Tom. "And it's this. You girls have noticed as well as we boys have, that if things don't go differently with some of our estimable class-mates we will begin to dwindle in numbers at the end of the year. Miss Marker hasn't said much, and I don't believe she will. It isn't her way. But it doesn't take a whole dictionary full of words to give a fellow the bounce either, and when the time comes she'll say the few that are necessary."

"And what we've been saying is that we ought to be doing something," put in John. "We agreed to stand by each other and to tell each other when things would go wrong, and here's our chance now."

"You mean Posey Berner," observed Fannie.

"Yes, and Rob Hoodley too," added Corine.

"Good guesses," chuckled Jim. "If you girls had spoken out that way at the start, you could have saved us all this trouble of breaking the ice and coming to the point."

"Jim," giggled Fannie, "you're just too silly for any use. As if we had called you out here to talk this over, instead of you us. We didn't even know what was in the wind. But that's just the way with you boys."

"Well, now," said Helen, "I have been noticing Posey and Rob too; but I thought there was time yet to wait. If the rest of you believe we ought to act at once, I think one of us had better speak to Rosie and one to Rob. Perhaps we can do them a great deal of good."

"But that's just where the rub comes," cried Tom. "Catch me going to that rich nabob and dictating to him."

"Nonsense, Tom," returned Corine. "Who's talking about dictating? We want to help him."

"Pretty rough sort of help, though," objected Tom.

"Yes, but Tom," explained Helen. "If you were drowning, and somebody should jerk you out of the water by the hair, so that your scalp would be sore for a week afterwards, do you think you would feel hard toward him for saving your life?"

"I wish somebody would jerk his hair that way this moment," observed Fannie. "He needs it."

But Tom paid no attention. His head was busy with the task in hand.

"Suppose one of you girls speaks to Rob," he ventured.

"No, it must be one of you boys," asserted Helen.

"Well, I can't do it," said Tom.

"Nor I," said John.

"Same here," concluded Jim.

"Well, why not?" queried Corine.

"Just because he'd fire us out of the yard," said Tom decisively.

"I think that's all a mistake, boys," urged Corine. "If I know anything at all, Rob will be glad to know what's wrong with him. That's one trouble with Miss Marker. She is too short, and doesn't explain a person's faults enough. Rob is trying as well as he knows how, and I say again, he'll be glad if you give him a kind lift."

"That's exactly the state of the case, Corine," commented Helen; "and I think the best person to tell Rob will be John."

Thus appealed to, John rejoined: "Well, I don't relish the job exactly, and if I'm not mistaken Rob will be good and mad. He is good-natured enough as a general thing; but when these

good-natured fellows once feel insulted, it's 'look out' all day and every day for a while. 'There's no harm in trying to do good, though, so I'll promise to tell Rob. But who will talk to Rosie?'

"Corine," decided Helen.

Corine consented. So they dispersed.

John spoke to Rob next day, and was astonished at the result.

"Say, Rob, you know the class agreed to kind o' father and mother each other during their High School course. We've been noticing that you aren't getting along very well, and so several of us have decided to speak to you about it. I hope you'll not be offended."

Instead of answering, Rob sat down on a bench and, big boy though he was, burst out crying. John did not know what to make of that. He stood a while irresolute, and then sat down by Rob, and, laying his hand on his shoulder, said:

"Look here, Rob, tell me what's bothering you. I've had more than one hard row to hoe myself, and if you are in trouble maybe I can help you."

Rob began to grow quieter now, and presently looked up rather shame-facedly. There was no mistaking the honest look in John's manly face, and Rob explained that he was trying as hard as he could, but that somehow things wouldn't work.

"Now Rob," said John, "you let me give you a little advice. You have things pretty easy—we all know how well off your folks are, and it's no disgrace, for I know your father got his money honestly and uses it right, and that's more than a good many rich men can say. But the trouble is right here. You think you are studying hard; but the fact is, you have things so easy in everything else that you don't really know what hard work is. Now, you ought to put just twice as much time on your studies as you do. The truth is, you go riding almost every evening, and you go hunting about every Saturday, and there are other things I might mention. Don't you see, you can't do all these things and get your lessons at the same time?"

"If I thought that would help, I'd quit all my fun right off, and do as you say," rejoined Rob.

"Well, you try it two or three weeks," laughed John, "and see how it will work."

"I'll do that, John. And here—let's shake. I'm glad you told me." And the boys parted.

Rob needed no more talking to after that. He forged ahead, and stood well up in the intermediate ranks of the class. John never told the class of the details of his interview with Rob. He only said that Rob had acted sensibly and would brace up.

Corine's adventure with Posey was not so interesting. She did not find an opportunity to speak to her after school next day, so she called at her house as she went home from school.

"O Corine, I'm so glad to see you," and Posey flitted about perfectly delighted. "Come in and sit down. I want to show you my new jacket. And did I tell you? Aunt Mina sent me the beautifulest little gold watch yesterday. You know she just got back from Europe day before yesterday. We are all going over in three years, after I am graduated, you know, and I just can't think of anything else."

Corine looked at the jacket and the watch, and admired them dutifully.

"Now Rosie," she began, when Rosie showed signs of talking a little less, "I came to tell you something. Do you know you are thinking of other things too much and of your school-work too little? We don't want to lose you out of the class, and thought we'd speak to you. You can easily have a good standing, we all know that; and it's the greater pity you shouldn't have it, seeing that you could if you would. Don't you think you could pitch in and work a little harder?"

"Why, is it as bad as all that, Corine? Miss Marker hasn't said anything particular."

“It isn’t Miss Marker’s way to say much. She expects High School scholars to be old enough to know their duties, Rosie. And we all agreed the other day, six of us, that your chances will be slim unless there is a change soon.”

“Well, if it’s as bad as that, I’ll be more careful. I didn’t know I’d been so shocking. Papa and mamma have been talking to me, but I thought they were just trying to scare me into getting an extra good rating. I’ll promise, Corine, to stick to the class.”

“All right, Rosie; I’m very glad;” and Corine left.

Rosie did better after that; not much better, but at least well enough to maintain her membership in the class. So they all plodded through that year, and were now middlers.

Their second year was, in most respects, like the first. There were no stirring events to mark it. This does not mean that their school-life was humdrum. It was anything but that. A steady interest was kept up, there was an ardent emulation among the pupils, there were brilliant efforts and successes in orations and essays, there were animated struggles for first place, there was a plenty of exercise in the fields for the botany-class and in the laboratory for the natural-philosophy class,

there were class-meetings and a debating society, there was a lively social relation kept up, there were games of football and baseball, and all the other regular events that take place in High School courses all over the land. But the occurrence of all these we take as being self-evident, and for that reason I have said that the days passed on without having anything noteworthy happen.

If you will take a glance at the class now, though, you will notice considerable excitement. Tom Green is bustling around as if the existence of Riverton depended on his movements. Almost every day he is calling at the Drew mansion, and he and the vice-president have earnest consultations. Extra class meetings are keeping Corine busy recording voluminous minutes. Milda Trapp is penning messages in her most business-like hand. And people that do not know that Tom and John and Helen are the executive committee of the middleers must be supposing that a plot involving the safety of the Republic forever is being laid, so assiduous are they. Still, all this is nothing more than the preparation for what is called at Riverton High School the Middleers' May Merry-Making.

It had become an unwritten law at Riverton that this merry-making must take place; but the law

did not do service as a means of compulsion. It needed not that. The law served only as a rule and an expression of custom. The plan of the merry-making was the following:

The middlers arranged an excursion to any out-of-town point. Riverton now had four railroads, each one running numerous trains, so that excursions in any direction were practicable. There were, besides, two small steam-launches that would on due notice (long enough time to get up steam), and for due compensation, take pleasure-parties down the river.

The excursions of the middlers were not necessarily limited to a certain mode of transportation, the only requirement being that they go out of town. To these excursions the seniors were invited, but they were not given the least information of the point to which the excursion would be run. It was left to their wit and ingenuity to discover this, and to get themselves to the objective point as well as they could. It was accounted perfectly fair to carry on eaves-dropping when the middlers were having their consultation meetings. Anything, in short, which would help to discover the middlers' plans was called entirely fair. If any senior were caught in the act, however, a fine was imposed upon him, consisting of not less than a

speech or a song at the merry-making, and of not more than ice-cream for the whole middle class, to be paid sometime before commencement of that year on a day set by the middlels.

The class of '81 were fortunate in possessing a Jim Stevens. They instituted him sergeant-at-arms, and one by one the unfortunate seniors fell into his athletic hands, until seven had been arraigned before the smiling middlels. The fines imposed were: ice-cream, angels' food, ham-sandwiches, chocolate bon-bons, oranges, charlotte-russe, and lemonade. So great was the misfortune of the seniors that they then and there resolved simply to give the heroic middlels a fine banquet, and be done with it, a resolution which they afterwards faithfully kept.

As far as the plans of the "youngsters," as the seniors called them, were concerned, they knew as little as ever. Nor were they likely to find them out, for they were not only highly ingenious, but were also a decided innovation.

The classes heretofore had made it a rule to go out of town either by rail or by water, never thinking of being transported in any other way. It is so in everything, big things and little. People get into certain ways of doing a thing, and there they stick. Then, when somebody introduces a change,

some say, "The old way is good enough for us," and the others say, "Why didn't somebody think of that before?" They are both to be taken to task. A thing is not good enough for humanity if a better is within reach, especially in as easy reach as the newly discovered things usually are; and, on the other hand, as regards the not thinking of things before, they might have been thought of before if more thinking had been done generally. It is actually astonishing how little independent thinking is done by the average person.

The plan of the middlers was this. They knew that their guests would be keeping a close watch at the railroad stations and at the boat-houses. Besides, the old schemes were too tame for their enterprising blood. So, after much planning and consultation, they had, led on by a suggestion which John Perkins had at first made in pure fun, but which Corine had grasped and in which she saw great possibilities, finally evolved the plan of abandoning both railroads and steamboats, and getting out of town by means of horse-conveyance. The objective point was the Doner farm, that part of it, especially, which was the old homestead, and was at that time occupied by the Lees.

The middlers had contracted for the only carry-all that the village afforded, a quite fine and large

band-wagon, owned by one of the local livery-men. They were certain that even if the seniors did discover their plan at the last moment, they would have a long chase-around to get enough suitable horses and conveyances to carry them out. The senior class numbered eighteen. Besides all this, the middlers had decided to perpetrate a ruse. They would start out in a direction that would make it appear as if they were going to the old fishing-grounds up the river. Then, by a round-about road, they would reach the farm.

The eventful day dawned at last, and a finer day no one could have wished, so bright and cloudless, so sweet and balmy. It was one of those incomparable American May-days that make those people who pretend they like winter best say, "Well, summer is pretty nice after all;" and make cityites acknowledge, "Well, there is something pretty fine about country-life at any rate;" and make boys say, "Ma, can't I go bare-footed to-day?" and make old-country folks say, "Well, America is a pretty good place to live just the same."

The middlers kept even their assembling place a secret. And when at seven o'clock that morning the gay band-wagon dashed through the streets, gorgeously decorated with bunting in blue and gold, loaded with the triumphant class, the seniors who

were appointed to do the street-patrolling were almost wild with astonishment.

“Briggs,” shouted one of them to his nearest companion, “you get the other fellows and hire some rigs as quick as you can, while I run around the corner to where I’ve got my pony tied and chase after them and find out what their scheme is.” (Even seniors forget to use fine English when they are excited.)

Briggs began to do as he had been told, while Franks, the speaker, jumped on his pony and dashed after the fast-disappearing wagon. This he followed through the town, past the mill, and about a quarter of a mile up the river road.

“Ha, ha,” said he, “I begin to see through their great scheme. And that’s what those long things are, sticking out of the end of the wagon—fish-poles. Pretty good scheme, if I do have to acknowledge it. Pretty good scheme. I’ll bet a dollar that’s some of that Perkins’ cuteness. And Corine Hereford’s hand has been in it, too. Well, we’re in for it. So here goes back. Wonder where we’ll get enough rigs. Only hope the other fellows are dusting around.” And, casting one more look at the cloud of dust up the road, he wheeled his pony around, and cantered into town again.

Arrived there, he found a number of his class-

mates running about in great consternation, trying to find enough conveyances to carry their class. Their success was slow, but in the end better than they had dared to expect ; for they finally secured a picnic wagon that would accommodate twelve of them, and an old surrey that would carry the remaining six if they did not object to a little crowding. It was almost eight o'clock when they started, however, and then they had forgotten two of the girls and one of the boys, a committee which had been sent for some fishing-lines and some hooks, and were compelled to drive back several blocks to get them. The poles they expected to cut after they reached the fishing-grounds.

Mr. and Mrs. Boise, the principal of the High School and his wife, accompanied them in a phæton as monitors, and now the chase began in real earnest.

CHAPTER IX.

A JOLLY TIME.

Meanwhile the middlers had dashed out the river road about a mile and a half, when they turned to the right at old Colonel White's farm, where the big red barn stood at the cross-roads, drove east four miles, then took the slant road, which crossed the direct road from Riverton to the farm about one mile west of the farm; then turning east again reached the farm all safe and sound, and after having had the jolliest kind of a drive. It is true that, by making this detour, they had to travel eight and a half miles instead of the six miles of the direct road; but who ever heard of a picnic party objecting to a little lengthening of the trip to the grounds? The fact that Professor and Mrs. Scranton were with them in the band-wagon did not tend to make the crowd less lively.

They had barely got started when Tom and Fannie began their first quarrel.

"What's in that bottle you're holding so carefully?" said her tormentor.

"None of your business," snapped she.

"Why, of course it is. I've got some candy here that I intend to give you if you'll tell me what it is."

"Fine candy?" asked Fannie. She was particular about the candy she ate.

"Yes sir-ree," said he. "It's the best Daddy Rice had in the shop. Now, what's in the bottle?"

"Well, if you must know, it's vanilla. We're going to make ice cream out at the farm. Now give me the candy."

"Hold on a bit. I don't believe it is vanilla. You don't get the candy until I know for sure what it is."

"Well, look at it then, if you think you can tell better that way, you goosie. You don't suppose I brought laudanum along to flavor the ice cream, do you?"

"I don't know. It would be just about like somebody I know, that brought her geography down for singing practice two days in succession."

Fannie began to lose patience at that, but she scornfully handed him the bottle. Tom took it with the wise air of a chemist and held it to the light. Then he carefully removed the cork and put the bottle to his nose. Assuming an air of astonishing gravity, he said:

"My friends, this is not vanilla, as this young lady would have us believe."

"I guess this young lady knows just about as much as you do, Tom Green, and if that isn't extract of vanilla you can eat dinner with me. As for the present, I disdain to have anything more to say to you on the subject. Your ignorance is too utterly dense."

In answer, Tom turned to the professor.

"Professor, is this not extract of the tonqua-bean?"

"Yes, Tom, it undoubtedly is. As I told you in class day before yesterday, the true vanilla bean does not get into the extracts of our grocers and druggists."

The shout that rose at Fannie's expense was deafening. She turned her back on Tom and said:

"I sha'n't speak to you again to-day, so there!"

"What a nice quiet dinner I'll have," said he, as he winked at the others of the class, "with nobody to bother me with her rattling tongue—ah!"

Thus they laughed and talked away, these merry middlers, every one of them happy and gay as a lark; only, of course, some were more lively than others.

Even Ada Lansen was laughing and chatting away. She was a rather sour girl at other times;

one of those people that will never look at the bright side of anything. You have often met them. When you call their attention to anything that is pretty or speak of any person that is prosperous, they begin their answers with the invariable phrase, "Yes, but—." Ada had heard her parents grumble about this, that, and the other, ever since she had been able to hear at all. It was small wonder that she had acquired the same habit.

"Just see what nice black ground," said Posey Berner, as they were passing a field where a farmer was plowing beautiful rich furrows.

"Ground isn't always rich when it looks black," said Ada.

"Oh, isn't it?" asked Posey.

"No indeed," said Ada.

"Why, I always thought it was," said Posey.

"That must be good ground over there," put in Mary Charman. "Just see how nice and fresh that green stuff looks that's growing there."

"What is that green stuff, Ada?" asked Milda. "It looks green and sweet enough to eat."

"Why, it's wheat," answered Ada. "It does look nice enough, but it will not amount to half a crop if we don't soon have rain."

At this point Fannie forgot herself. She had espied some beautiful violets by the roadside.

"Oh, Tom," she cried. "Do get me some of those violets."

"I sha'n't," stoutly asserted Tom, "unless you promise to speak to me again."

"Well, haven't I spoken?"

"That's what," said he. "Here, driver, stop the wagon."

"No sir, the seniors will catch us," squealed Willie Seeler.

"Aw, pshaw, they haven't started yet," growled Jim. And he was right, too.

The wagon was stopped, and Tom fetched the violets for Fannie.

"See the cows," said Helen. "I always think cows look so peaceful and home-like."

"So do I," said Corine.

"How much would a cow like that red one bring?" asked Rob Hoodley.

"Well, the prices vary a great deal," returned Hal Lee, to whom he had spoken.

"It seems to me I'd hate to part with a cow after having owned her a while," said Helen.

"Do you ever sell any?" queried Jane, turning to Ada.

"Yes, of course we do," answered she. "We farmers have to do something to make a little money now and then."

"Maybe you can tell how much the butcher gives for a cow," said Rob, addressing Ada.

"I don't remember just how much they give, but they don't give any too much," answered she.

"Well, I'll bet I'd know how much I was getting for my stuff," thought Rob. But he said nothing further.

"This field can't be so good as the other one we saw," said Milda. "The color of the stuff is just as pretty, but it is not nearly so tall and thrifty."

"Well, I guess not," said Harold; "this is oats, and the other was wheat."

"I don't see why the oats shouldn't be so tall as the wheat, though," rejoined she.

"The very good reason for that is that wheat is sown in the fall, and the oats are not put into the ground until spring," laughed Hal.

"How much oats do you raise on an acre around here?" asked Rob.

"Oh, sometimes as high as sixty and sixty-five bushels," said Hal.

"Yes, but not when the grasshoppers or the army-worms get into them," added Ada.

"Does that happen often?" wondered Milda.

"Often enough," replied Ada.

"Why, we haven't had any army-worms since as far back as I can remember; and the grasshop-

pers haven't bothered either for at least ten years," said Hal.

"Yes, but once in a lifetime is about all a person wants to stand." This of course from Ada.

They reached the farm at half-past eight, and immediately began to make themselves at home. Mr. Doner did not rent his part of the farm except on condition that the tenant promised to keep it looking neat, besides doing his best to raise good crops. He had always taken time and pains to keep it neat as long as he lived there himself; and he reasoned from that, that another man could do the same. He did not have to insist very long with Mr. Lee. At first this gentleman had said that it would not pay him to farm in that fashion. But Mr. Doner had a strong ally in Mrs. Lee, and before Peter Lee had been on the place a year he learned two things: in the first place, that it did in many ways pay him to be Deacon Doner's tenant; and in the second place, that it did not ruin him to observe on the farm those rules of order and neatness which are so generally observed in the pursuit of other occupations.

The consequence was that his farm did not present the sorry spectacle so often seen: fence corners a jungle of weeds and other growth, machines standing about in the rain and storm, door-yard

overrun by chickens and pigs, and barnyard resembling the Slough of Despond. It was an ideal place to visit, and the class did not wait long to express their appreciation of the choice made by the executive committee and the officers. "This is fine," you could hear them saying everywhere they went.

Helen was greatly pleased, as she had her father's love for the old place. She delighted to go out there and find it looking its best, and to hear it praised.

Perhaps Harold was just as well pleased. He had inherited his mother's love for order and neatness, and was often heard to say what he would do if he owned such-and-such a farm.

"Wait till you're a few years older," his neighbor, Mr. Lansen, had at first told him. "There are a few things that you and your folks has got to learn yet."

When a few years had gone by, and the Lees prospered, he would say to the other neighbors, "Them Lees has got the biggest luck I ever see." He remained good friends with "them Lees," however, and often spent his evenings with them. By and by he began to feel the influence of the neatly kept place on himself, and one evening, as he and wife were driving home, he said :

"Say, Susan, let's us try to keep our place looking a little better too, eh? What do you say?"

Susan was glad enough to hear him say this, as she had been thinking the same thing herself for some time. So she said:

"All right. But don't you think the neighbors will be laughing at us?"

"There is only one neighbor whose laughing would bother me any, and that is Peter Lee, and I know he isn't the kind of man to laugh at a fellow for trying to do what's right," answered her husband; and thereafter they began to improve the looks of their place wonderfully, much to Mr. Doner's delight, who had often urged Eliza and Emma to be stricter with their tenant.

As there was no danger of being soon disturbed by the seniors, the middlers were taking their time in examining anything and everything on the place that might possibly be of any interest to them. Harold proudly piloted them about, explaining things to them and calling their attention to special features.

"Look here," he was saying, "how do you like our new pig-pens? You see we have arranged them so that each kind can be kept separate, and we have built shelters over all the stalls. How do you like them, Jim?"

"Well," drawled Jim, "I think I would like them pretty well if I were a pig."

The girls thought this inexpressibly funny, and for a time it was feared that Corine and Helen would not quit laughing for the remainder of the day. Jim wondered what made them laugh so long, but he contented himself by concluding that he had said something wonderfully clever, and was happy accordingly.

It took the class about an hour to make its tour of inspection. All this while Willie Seeler had been casting anxious looks out at the road, expecting to see the seniors arriving at any moment. But he had been afraid to say anything, as he knew that Tom and Jim and Harold would laugh at him. Now Tom and Jim themselves began to look out, as if there might be a possibility of their arriving.

"Do you think they will be coming soon, Tom?" asked Helen.

"Well, we can't tell," said he. "If they have followed us straight out they will be along pretty soon. I know Ted Briggs. He's a sharp one, and a quick one besides. If they don't find out that we turned the corner, they will, of course, be longer getting here. Then too, they may not find out that we came here at all. They may think that we drove back to town and went up to Viewpoint."

"Let's all sit down here on the porch and wait and see whether they will turn up," said Willie; and for once in his life he had the joy of seeing his advice followed.

They waited about half an hour, then grew tired of waiting, and began to amuse themselves in various ways, well satisfied to have the seniors arrive now at any time, since they considered themselves highly successful in having baffled them so well.

The seniors were indeed having an unlucky time of it. They had dashed on up the river road past Colonel White's to the usual fishing-grounds. Finding no one there, they began to think the middlers were in hiding somewhere, and instituted a search of the neighborhood. The middlers were not to be seen. Somebody suggested that they enquire of a boy planting corn in a neighboring field.

"Good," said Briggs.

"Hello there, son," he called.

"Why don't you call him moon?" asked one of the young ladies. "He don't appear to be particularly bright."

This occasioned a gush of laughter and hurrahs. The boy turned his team around and drove toward the other end of the field again. He did not care to be laughed at by a set of High School fellows, for such he knew the boys to be.

"Briggs, don't let him escape," shouted Franks.

"No, no, no," chorused the girls.

Thus admonished Briggs grew desperate. He started across the road, shouting to the boy:

"Hey there, stranger, hold a bit." The boy drove on.

Briggs climbed the fence, shouting, "Say, here's fifty cents for you," and jumped down on the strip of grass that bordered the field within. Here he stopped short, not intending to hazard his finely polished shoes on the plowed ground. But he had stopped too short when he jumped down off the fence. The sudden stop of his feet was not followed by a corresponding stop of his head and body, and he sprawled headlong into the plowed ground.

The boy, hearing the words "fifty cents," had stopped his team and looked around. But such a shout as was raised was enough to make any boy distrustful, and he turned away again in disgust. He had not seen Briggs fall, and imagined they were laughing at him.

When Briggs returned to the waiting class they were trying to be very sober and sympathetic. Their success was not brilliant, however. Briggs was always so much of a dandy, and so vain of his appearance, that secretly they were all quite happy that his pride had taken a tumble.

“How very unfortunate, Mr. Briggs,” simpered one of the young ladies. “Shall we drive to town and fetch a physician?”

“No, I thank you,” quoth the unhappy Briggs. “I think I shall recover if I do not encounter any more such stupid boys—or other people like him,” he added, spitting out some earth which had entered his mouth when he fell. As he saw the ill-restrained laughter in the faces of his classmates, he was angry enough to say anything.

It was fortunate that Franks noticed a man in the field farther down the road, for it was becoming highly desirable that something should happen to divert their minds from the subject in hand. Franks and Soper were sent down to interview the man, and soon returned with the intelligence that the man had been in the field since early morning but had seen nothing of any fishing party. “He also sent a message for you, Briggs,” added Soper; “he said: ‘Tell the feller as fell offen the fence, I’ve got a lot of clods in this here field, an’ he can have the job o’ breakin’ them, if he wants it.’” Soper didn’t care much what he said to Briggs, and it must be confessed that even Mr. Boise joined in the laugh which followed this thrust.

There was nothing for the seniors to do but to enter their carriages and to face about.

"I wonder where they have gone, anyway," said one.

"I'll tell you," said another. "'They've gone back to town and left on the train while we are out here looking for them.'"

"Oh, I forgot to say anything about a paper I found in the school-yard yesterday," said one of the girls. "I have it in my purse this minute. Here it is," and she produced a piece of letter paper and handed it to Sam Soper. It was a piece of a note.

"That's Milda Trapp's writing, if I know anything when I see it," said Mabel Weyers. "Read it, Sam."

"It's torn off above and below," answered he, "but I'll read what there is of it:

"'ham, pickles, bologna, twelve cakes, olives, vanilla, and three cans of jam. Be sure not to forget any of them. Bring them all down to Fannie's to-night, and be sure you drive up the back way, as I have reason to believe they have spies out already to-day watching us. When we get out to the farm we will put every—'"

Sam stopped reading.

"Well, go ahead," said Clara Berks.

"I cannot possibly do so, my friends," said Sam.

"My powers of reading any further are absolutely

overcome—by the fact that here endeth this interesting epistle, at least so far as we have it in hand.”

“Well, well, well. The question now is, what does it mean,” said Franks.

“That’s right,” said Sam. “How are we going to find out, though?”

“I see through the whole thing,” spoke up Mabel. “Look here; it’s this. You know down the road where we passed the big red barn that Sam said looked like a hippopotamus? Well, that’s where old Colonel White lives, and there the road turns off to the east. By going down that road some way, you reach the Doner farm, and that’s where they have gone. I just know it. I don’t remember the way you go, but I know you can get there by that road, because I was out riding one evening with Corine Hereford and her mother, and we drove down that way, and they showed me a place and said it was the old Doner farm.”

“I believe you’re right,” said Sam. “Any way we can go back as far as the Colonel’s, and inquire there whether they saw any crowd going that way.”

They drove rapidly down the road. When they reached the big red barn they drew up and accosted a man who was working in the stable-yard.

“Say, Mister,” called Sam, “is Colonel White at home?”

"I don't allow as he is."

"Well, have you been around here for the last two hours?"

"Well, I 'low I have."

"Have you seen anything of a big wagon going past here?"

"Yep, 'low I have."

"Was it loaded full?"

"It were, yes sir."

"Did you notice who was in it?"

"Well, they was a big feller drivin'."

"Yes, but the rest of the load."

"Well, I'low he must of had at leastways some fifteen er sixteen."

"That must be they," said Mabel aside.

"Did they go right down east here?" continued Sam.

"Nope. They went west acrost the bridge there."

"That knocks our calculations all to pieces," said Clara.

"Just wait a bit. I'll ask him some more," said Sam. "Say, did you notice how many were boys and how many were girls?"

"Why, 'twere a load o' sheep," said he of the barnyard.

"That's the middlers, sure," said Franks. Only

the fear of the consequences kept them all from laughing outright at this. But they did not wish to repeat their experience with the boy out at the fishing-grounds; so they remained quiet as well as they could, and Sam began again.

"Did you see any other wagon?"

"What kind?"

"Oh, a big one with four horses."

"What color wheels?"

"Bless me, I don't know. Yellow, I guess."

"What kind o' hosses?"

"Why two white ones, and two gray," said Franks.

"What color wagon-body?"

"Why, red I believe," continued Franks. (Sam was glad to get out of the conversation.) "It was the band-wagon from Riverton we mean."

"Oh, was they a musicianer crowd in it?"

"No. A crowd of boys and girls."

"No ole folks?"

"Well, yes. Two."

"Two men?"

"No. A gentleman and a lady."

"Didn't have only three horses?"

"No, had four."

"Well, I ain't seen no sech wagon."

"Did you see one with three horses?" Franks

thought perhaps he had made a mistake about the number.

"Nope. Ain't seen no sech one nuther."

"The great big idiot, I'd like to smash his head for him," growled Briggs.

"Well, may be you could if you'd get up on the fence and fall on him," suggested Soper.

The man went ahead with his fence-repairing, and the seniors were once more hopelessly at a loss.

"I move we risk it. Let's drive on down to the Doner farm. It's the best thing we can do," said Sam.

They were just jerking the reins up on the horses to start them, when the man called out :

"Say, Colonel White 'lowed he see sech a wagon as ye say pass this mornin'. I was in the barn pitchin' down hay to the critters wen it passed, an' couldn't shin down spry enough to git a squint at 'em."

"Did he say they went east?" began Sam again.

"'Low he did."

"Well, can you tell us the way to the old Doner farm?"

"'Low I kin."

"Which way do we go?"

"East."

"Yes, I know. But how far?"

"Ye said, wich way."

"I know I did. That was my mistake. How far do we go?"

"'Bout seven mile if ye go right."

"Why, isn't it a straight road?"

"Nope, you make some turns."

"Well, will you please tell us just how to get ourselves there in the quickest possible time?"

"'Low by goin' in yer wagons."

"I mean the road."

"Well, every mile down east here on this road they is a cross-road. Ye go down three mile, an' at the crossin' they is a school-house. Ye don't turn off there, but keep right straight on. Two mile futher ye come to wat be called the Bloomin'-ville pike. But ye don't want ter go that fur, 'cause they's another way that's nearder. Wen ye git four mile out from here, ye'll strike the ole slant road. Ye turn to the right on that, an' fol-ler it 'bout two mile. There ye strike the River-ton pike, turn west on that, an' in 'bout a mile ye strike the ole Doner place."

"Is that all?"

"'Low 'tis."

"I should think that were enough," said Mabel.

"Why are you asking for more, Sammy?"

"Well, I've forgotten about all he told me, and I thought if he kept it up a while longer I'd remember some of it at least."

"Drive on," growled Briggs. "I don't see why you wanted to talk to that old duffer over half an hour any way. He doesn't know anything."

"I'll bet he knows how to climb a fence without chewing the clods on the other side, anyhow," put in Soper; at which Briggs grew all the glummer, and the others indulged in another boisterous effusion of mirth.

"'Low that's so," said Mabel. And that brought out a spell of laughter at the expense of the old man.

"I declare, it's a shame to laugh at him, when he took such pains to direct us right," said Clara.

"Don't you worry about the old man," said Franks. "He's having a great big guffaw at our expense right now, and he'll tell his children and children's children about how he fooled us, all the rest of his born days."

After much inquiring along the way, they finally reached the farm at about a quarter past twelve. The middlers had dinner all ready for them, and they soon lost their sadness and fatigue among the good things spread out for them. The day was a pronounced success, and at a late hour they all returned to Riverton, tired and happy.

CHAPTER X.

COMMENCEMENT.

This example of the middlers' shrewdness became known throughout the town, and thereafter you could hear people everywhere talking about "those smart middlers." The name was not inappropriate in other respects than this one, for they were a bright class throughout their studies, averaging quite a bit higher than any preceding middle class in the history of the school. Rob and Posey had been doing wonderfully well, and the others had all improved steadily. There had been as good individual scholars in former classes, but for all-around excellence, the class of '81 as middlers could hardly be surpassed. The result was that when they reached the end of the year the examinations were passed, not in a sensational blaze of glory, with individual per cents. above one hundred, but in a solid fashion that brought the class average up to ninety and three-fifths per cent. With this record they became seniors.

It can readily be understood that, with a training

such as was indicated by these figures, their work as seniors was excellent. They approached the final examination with a perfect confidence in their ability to bear its severest hardships. As this confidence was not a vain pride in their own powers, but a reasonable reliance on a foundation which had been well built up from the very beginning, the trust which they so placed was not misplaced.

If scholars and teachers generally would only bear this in mind, they might spare themselves all of that torturing anxiety that almost always keeps them worried half to death for weeks before examination time; they would likewise spare themselves much of that humiliation which becomes theirs in a year or two after examinations, when they and others discover that all they once pretended to know has vanished away without as much as saying, "Excuse me, please," or leaving a card to show that it has been about.

The examinations this year drew larger crowds than usual. It was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the erection of the High School building. Invitations to be present and to help make the festival a success had been sent to all the former graduates whose whereabouts could be determined. They had come in large numbers in response to this call. In

consequence, our seniors had a critical audience to face during examinations and commencement exercises.

The examinations were oral and were not taken as a basis for graduation, the scholars being judged by their work during the whole school year. The public examinations took place on Monday and Tuesday of commencement week. On Monday evening the annual banquet given by the seniors to the teachers was celebrated at the "Hotel Riverton." Tuesday evening was set apart for the business and social meeting of the Alumni and Alumnae. The commencement exercises proper took place on Wednesday evening at the "Riverton Public Hall," a well arranged and commodious building which had been erected for the especial purpose of accommodating meetings, lectures, commencements, and the like.

Public opinion in Riverton was against the custom of using the churches for these purposes. This had formerly been done; but, after a number of prominent citizens, with Mr. Doner at their head, had pointed out the inappropriateness of using God's house for purposes not strictly sacred, and often the direct opposite, public opinion reached the conviction that a change should by all means be made. A stock company was formed, and the

“Riverton Public Hall ” was built. It was a success at once, and paid a fair profit to its promoters, besides satisfying them that they had done something for the honor of God’s house and the elevation of the moral sense of the community.

Riverton took a great pride in its commencements. On Sunday evening St. Luke’s was crowded to the very doors with a fine representation of the town’s and the surrounding country’s people. Pastor Denton had been selected to deliver the baccalaureate sermon for this year. He delivered a sermon, too, not merely a scholarly address. He had considered it his duty to preach God’s Word to these young people, and not simply to make an exhibition of his attainments before the many strangers visiting his church that evening.

He took as his text the words, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” At the outset he spoke of the object of our lives, saying that it cannot be attained without true education. He said that education was the acquiring of wisdom. He showed how there is a vast difference between true wisdom and simple learning. He established from Scripture that there can be no real wisdom without the fear of the Lord.

He explained who this Lord is, not only a Supreme Being, but the Supreme Being who has

manifested himself in the Holy Bible, and as he has manifested himself in this Bible, namely the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three distinct persons in one essence, loving a sinful world, the Son assuming our flesh, becoming true man without ceasing to be God, redeeming our souls by becoming our substitute both in the bearing of our punishment and in the fulfillment of the law for us.

He continued by showing what is meant by the fear of the Lord; not only a knowledge of Him and His mercy, not only in addition to such knowledge the acceptance of His Word as the objective truth, but, above all, an acceptance of this Saviour and of His salvation as a personal subjective possession of the inmost soul, and a placing of the heart's firmest confidence on Him in all matters, whether temporal or spiritual.

He closed with a strong plea, urging all his audience, and especially the class, to give ear to God's voice, and begin aright by allowing God to lay in their hearts, as the foundation for all wisdom, the fear of the Lord.

The sermon was well received and seemed to produce a profound impression. The preaching of God's true Word always does impress the hearer. We have God's promise that it will. In spite of

this we still find so many of God's prophets who seem to think that by arguments of their own they can produce the desired results sooner and better. And is it not often the case, where God's servant has determined not to know anything except Christ and Him crucified, that the pressure brought to bear upon him by those whose souls' keeping has been entrusted to his care becomes so great in its demand that he preach something else, that he is forced to yield? Is it any wonder that people's faith is so unstable, and that therefore men are losing confidence in the efficacy of God's Word really and powerfully to touch the heart?

As you and I have no invitations to attend the banquet on Monday evening and the meeting on Tuesday evening, we will have to stay away. I think, however, we may safely conclude that both were entirely successful, judging from the remarks we hear on the following mornings.

The commencement on Wednesday evening is open to all, and that we will now attend. In those days it was still custom at Riverton that each one of the graduates appeared in some rôle on the programme. It made the exercises somewhat lengthy, it is true, but those who had come to hear them were interested mainly in the young people, and did not seriously object to the lengthy feature.

For fear that I might slight any of your special friends in the narration of this story, I will reproduce the programme exactly as it was rendered that day. Here it is.

PROGRAMME.

32d ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT,

RIVERTON HIGH SCHOOL,

JUNE 15TH, 1881.

Music	<i>Riverton Orchestra.</i>
Prayer	<i>Rev. Charles J. Camper.</i>
Music—Piano	<i>Miss Ethel Boise.</i>
Salutatory	<i>Fannie E. Drew.</i>
Oration—Washington, the Patriot	<i>William Seeler.</i>
Essay—Love of the Beautiful	<i>Rose Berner.</i>
Song—The Brook	<i>Mrs. J. W. Carr.</i>
Oration—Our Country	<i>Harold J. Lee.</i>
Essay—Home, Sweet Home	<i>Helen F. Doner.</i>
Oration—"Me Too"	<i>Corine Hereford.</i>
Essay—Clouds	<i>Robert Fleet Hoodley.</i>
Duett—Larboard Watch	<i>Messrs. E. Smith and Jas. Scranton.</i>
Oration—"On the Fence"	<i>James M. Stevens.</i>
Essay—Loop Holes	<i>Mary H. Charman.</i>
Essay—Over the Alps Lieth Thine Italy	<i>Jane Armster.</i>
Piano—Four Hands	<i>Misses Ethel Boise and Alice Brown.</i>
Oration—True Heroes	<i>John Perkins.</i>
Class History	<i>Milda Trapp.</i>
Class Prophecy	<i>Ada Lansen.</i>
Valedictory	<i>Thomas Green.</i>
Statistics	<i>Principal Boise.</i>
Conferring of Diplomas	<i>Pres't Board of Education.</i>
Benediction	<i>Rev. J. J. Dawes.</i>
Music	<i>Orchestra.</i>

This programme was faithfully carried out as it is here given; and, to be perfectly candid, it must

be said that it was listened to with most evident interest and pleasure.

The music, excepting that of the orchestra, was furnished by undergraduates and former graduates of the school.

Fannie's salutatory was a very happy innovation on the usual cut-and-dried affair bearing that breezy name. People were somewhat surprised to find themselves really interested already in the salutatory, but afterwards they said, "We might have known it. That Fannie Drew is always doing something original."

Willie Seeler's oration was a great deal more forceful than any of his friends had expected.

Posey Berner had found a subject exactly suited to her taste, and, although she did not handle it with a specially marked degree of ability or with much depth of thought, still her essay was "quite fetching," as she herself would have expressed it.

Harold's speech is sufficiently explained by his subject, and, inasmuch as it is always said that we Americans have the special weakness of liking to hear ourselves and our "land of the free and the home of the brave" extolled to the skies, it can readily be surmised that his address "took" well, for he breathed never a word against our country or her institutions.

The next two numbers on the programme we will notice specially in a separate chapter. They were deserving of especial notice, and were both printed in full that week in the "Riverton Weekly Gazette."

Then comes Rob Hoodley's. The girls declared that his mother had selected his subject for him, as she was a quite sentimental woman, and Rob treated his subject rather sentimentally. Be that as it may, he succeeded in moving his audience to tears more than once, and felt that he had achieved a great success. We are not far from the truth when we say that his mother thought that her Robert had done better than any of the others. But, for that matter, what mother there that evening did not think the same of her child? And after all, isn't that a mother's undisputed privilege?

Everybody smiled as genial Jim Stevens, round and jolly as ever, arose at the announcement of his comical subject. Jim handled his theme in a manner, too, that was not calculated to chase these smiles away. For half the time allotted to him he kept his hearers in a perfect roar of merriment. Then, without their seeming to know how he did it, he let them safely down to soberer ground, where he kept them for the remainder of his time. He ended leaving them quite absorbed in a train of

sober reflections. They hardly knew that he had ended, and when they did discover the fact their smiles returned and they broke out into a burst of deafening applause. "That boy is a born orator," one of the old wise-acres was heard to remark. Then the story began to be whispered around that he was "going to be a minister," and the men said, "Good!" and the women said, "How nice! How proud his mother must be!"

It was a little bit difficult for Mary Charman to get the audience interested in her philosophical paper after that. But it was a courteous and good-natured audience, and she did not for a moment suspect she was not making the hit of the evening.

Jane Armster's would-be hopeful effusion passed muster before the same gracious review, and was all the more heartily applauded because it brought the promise of refreshing music at its close.

John Perkins' sermon—so named by his facetious classmates (seniors always at least try to be facetious)—was a remarkably strong address. Similar subjects had before that been treated by Riverton High School graduates, but never before with such animation, such earnest, convincing eloquence, such forcible logic. He spoke like a hero. He was a hero, a specimen of the one and only true kind, the hero that is recognized as such of God.

Milda, the precise, performed the customary functions of class historian. She did this in her usual exact manner, and so fittingly that Rosie for once wished she were more precise about things.

Then came the wonderful, mysterious, but perfectly harmless thing known as the class-prophecy. You would have been surprised at Ada; indeed, I believe you would not have known her at all. There was not a vestige of that old narrow, dark, complaining spirit, scenting only danger and seeing only the dark side of things. Ada had finally begun to feel the spirit of that Christianity of which she had all along known only the letter. Education was not without its effect, either; and Ada looked out over the future of the class of '81 with cheerful hope, yet not with the foolish conviction that they would all be carried sky-ward and heaven-ward bedded on rose-leaves, resting in mid-air, with not a speck of earth's dust to soil their raiment, and not a moment of earth's toil and sorrow to disturb the tranquil smoothness of their lives.

Tom's valedictory was an appropriate ending of the class programme. When they had rehearsed their essays and orations before each other during the weeks preceding the commencement, the girls had said, "Why, Tom, you talk as if you were our father." Out of his honest, manly heart Tom had

answered, "Well, do you know? I kind o' feel as if I were a sort of father to the class, having been temporary chairman for three whole years." He certainly did talk like a father to his children. People's verdict was, "It's refreshing to find so much good sense and earnestness in a young fellow like that in these days. I wish my boy were half as steady as this Green seems to be."

The statistics read by the principal contained a great deal which we already know. I will add only one remark, which he made at the close. He said: "When I was about to give this class their last term-reports, I told them that there were seven in the class whose scholarship averages for the whole High School course were so nearly the same, that fractions would have to be split very closely to determine who held the highest honors. I then proceeded to tell them what they already knew from their previous reports, who these seven were. Then, before I could proceed with said splitting of fractions, one of the young ladies included in the seven arose to request the postponement of the announcement of the result until the class should have had a meeting. I complied with this request, wondering what its significance might be. The meeting was held that same evening. When I met the class on the following morning, again pre-

pared to deliver their last reports and read their standing to them, the president of the class, in the name of the seven, requested that I agree not to read the reports in public this year. Appreciating the feeling in which this request was made, (remember that this was before the seven knew their relative positions in the list for first honors), I willingly granted the favor as preferred, and for that reason I refrain from giving these figures to the public to-night."

As he finished, a murmur of admiration ran through the audience. I cannot withhold my own admiration for this unselfishness, especially since the principal told me afterwards that the seven were all equally satisfied even after they learned the result. But I must confess that I have always been curious to know whose fraction was the highest, and so on, even if the differences were but trifles. You are curious to know, too, no doubt. But let us restrain our curiosity and go forward to congratulate the young people, and to congratulate them all the more warmly for having in their number seven young people who cared more for each other than for the public's praise and the honor that would accrue from having their names announced as standing at the head of the list.

I cannot, however, forbear telling you who the

seven were. Some of them you can guess yourselves; but I will give you a complete list, and you can have the pleasure of saying, "I told you so." Here they are: Tom, Jim, and John, of the boys; Corine, Helen, Fannie, and Milda, of the girls.

Let us hope that the others, who did not share in the highest grade, did share in this same spirit of unselfishness, and that this manifestation of a beautiful trait in these scholars will prove an earnest for their later lives, promising that, wherever they are and whatever they undertake, they will be guided by the spirit of Him who has said, "Love one another."

CHAPTER XI.

TWO ADDRESSES.

I.

"HOME, SWEET HOME."

AN ESSAY.

BY HELEN DONER.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." My heart is abundant with thoughts on a subject that assuredly has a right to demand an entrance into any heart. Therefore, of it my mouth shall speak. That subject is—The Home.

There are three main reasons why we should consent to allow this subject to occupy a chief room in our thoughts.

The first reason is the beauty and the blessing of the home. Who of you has ever seen a more beautiful, a sweeter picture, than that which is presented by a rightly ordered home-life? No poet, no painter, no sculptor, has ever produced its like. No dissatisfied boy or girl, leaving home for other places, which in imagination are so much finer, has ever found the reality to accord with the imagination. The beauty of the home is beyond

comparison. However, its beauty is, if anything, even surpassed by its value as a blessed influence upon mankind. The final judgment alone will reveal how many souls have been saved under the blessed influence of the home. Still, he were blind or prejudiced indeed, who already before that day would not say, "I see the blessings of the home."

The second reason is the necessity of the home. It is not only a sweet influence here on earth, it is an absolute necessity. It is the foundation of all other social institutions. It underlies the idea of all order and government in the state and in the church.

The third reason is that the home is in danger. Yes, a terrible danger is menacing the home to-day. This danger arises on the one hand from willfulness, and on the other hand from ignorance. I say from willfulness, because it certainly seems as though people were willfully spreading opinions and contracting habits that will as surely destroy the home, as disease will destroy the most perfect specimen of physical life. Let us hope that, in spite of this threatening danger, we may keep our homes.

But while we hope and pray for the preservation of these homes, let us not forget that "to us He gives the keeping of the lights along the shore,"

and let us least of all because of ignorance fail in doing our duty toward keeping our homes. How few really know what the home is, wherein its charm consists, where lies the secret of its power and its beauty.

It may seem strange, now, that a mere High School girl should wish on this subject to instruct men and women, many of whom long ago founded homes, and who have successfully and happily maintained them for more years than she herself has lived. Her purpose is not, however, to give sage advice and much new startling information. She wishes simply to bring the subject with its old truths once more before your minds.

This she proposes to do not in a manner in which soundness is sacrificed to sentimentality, and logic and truth to beauty, but in a straightforward matter-of-fact way, of which she hopes that it will not disappoint those who, from a glance at her subject, have been led to expect a poetical presentation of pretty ideas, but that it will carry conviction to all. "Home, sweet home" is a beautiful thing, but it cannot exist without a foundation of practical thoughts. The fairest lily grows up out of the blackest soil. The reddest-breasted robin still subsists on food that is, to say the least, rather below our ideas of palatableness. So let us

not be surprised if we find that to have the beauty and the music of "Home, sweet home" we must learn some practical truths, and some truths that are very objectionable to our own reason.

How can we have homes that are homes in truth? Just as we have other things that are what they are intended to be. To become entirely prosy, just as we have buildings and railroads and the commonest things. How do we go about having them? We inform ourselves as to what components are necessary, and then set ourselves about combining those components, assigning each to its proper place and relation to the others. This is the way to have homes. No matter if the home is the highest of earthly blessings, it can be had as easily as the commonest. But now, what is necessary to constitute a home?

I answer, in the first place, religion. Religion must be the life, the ruling spirit, and the foundation of the home. It must be present as that wonderful relation that it in reality is, the relation of God and men to each other. It must be part of the home, not only as the law and guide of the household, but also as their consolation and salvation. God must be in the home as an object of daily worship, of daily love, and of daily trust, and at the same time as the subject of the daily life.

The next figure in the ideal home should be the father. He is the visible head of the family, anointed as its prophet, priest, and king by Him who has founded all home life. But if the father would occupy the position of the head, he should also act the part of the head, in order truthfully to be this important component of the home. It is true, the head is not always competent to rule the body. Some heads have lost their power. In these cases our charitable judgment is expressed when we in sadness say they are deranged. The same sad truth must sometimes be expressed of the father as the head of the family. When a man degrades himself through cruelty, drunkenness, and other shame and vice, he becomes unfit to rule his house. Perhaps it is no wonder that so many people wish to change the proper order of things, and insist that the man is not the head of the family, because this sometimes happens. Yet it would be manifestly unfair to say that because some heads are not capable, therefore the head has ceased to be the chief part of our bodies. Just as unfair would it be to say that, because some fathers have not acted their parts well, therefore the father is no longer by divine right the head of the family. By saying so we lose a chief component of the home, and endanger the home's existence. No family can have

a real home unless it has a head, and it will never have a head when man and woman spend their married life arguing the point as to who shall hold that position.

By this I do not mean to say that the woman fills an unimportant place in the home. The old question is still in force, "What is home without a mother?" And the answer is just the same as it always has been, "It is not home at all." The mother's place is, if anything, more important than the father's. That air of sweetness and sacredness which is so difficult to express by words, yet which so largely makes home home, it is her privilege almost alone to give to it. Why then should women complain because the position and duties assigned to them as mothers are not the same as those of fathers, seeing theirs are so much higher?

Next in the home I would mention the children. Bless the little ones! If all people only knew what treasures they are. But, alas! some children look back with a shudder to the days when they were still under the parental roof, just because their parents did not recognize what treasures children are. For the same reason some families spend all their lives in childless homes, and then curse God because He has made their lives unhappy. Ah, if this human race would only hasten to arrive at the

conclusion, "Children are an heritage of the Lord," how much more happiness this earth might see! But at the same time children should remember their station and its duties, otherwise they may prove destroyers of the home, and not its builders.

Indeed, I might as well introduce just at this place the thought that to make a home requires not the simple presence of these component parts and their promiscuous jumbling together, but their perfect adjustment to each other, their perfect adaptation to their spheres, and their faithful and harmonious performance of their respective duties in their different spheres. What these duties all are I have not time and room to mention.

One thing, though, I do wish to mention yet, and that is the place in which these members of the home perform their parts. The house and its surroundings certainly dare not be forgotten in this essay. What kind of quarters should the home occupy?

I answer, no quarters are too fine, too beautiful, too stately, too grand, for this heavenly guest on earth. It is noble enough to fill with perfect dignity the world's grandest palaces and her loveliest gardens. Yet its nobility is of such nature as to fill without loss of either its sacred sweetness or

its divine dignity the humblest cottage on the lowliest street. Let us in the choice of a fitting setting for the home bear only this in mind, that it is worth our best efforts in art and beauty, in neatness and cleanliness. How many homes have lost their attractiveness, and with it their benign influence, through carelessness in the planning and furnishing and decorating of the house and grounds. With care and taste and labor and patience, what blessed spots these homes can be!

Oh, "home, home, sweet, sweet home!" My friends, I would rather be the lowliest servant in a peaceful, happy home, than be a proud and mighty monarch—homeless. Man, woman, child, no earthly position for which you can strive is higher than this, that you be a true member of the home. Oh, that all men and women on earth might have hearts willing and apt to see and appreciate the value of true home life, and, in addition, minds and hands ready and strong to found true homes, homes in which there were acknowledgment of God's supreme Fatherhood, and of His authority to define and fix the responsibilities of father and mother and child. Then we might, throughout this cheerless vale of tears, feel a promise of that everlasting home, that "building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

II.

"ME TOO."

AN ORATION.

BY CORINE HEREFORD.

This subject was suggested to me by the memory of a small boy who used to live next door to us, and whose counterpart has undoubtedly lived next door to a great many of you—perhaps even under the same roof with you, or shall I say within the same self? Whenever anybody within this boy's hearing proposed doing something or expressed a wish or an intention to have something, the words of this subject popped from his lips.

His big brother would be saying, "I believe I'll go fishing to-day." "Me too," would come the interruption. His mother would call him to her and say, "Now, I want you to be a good boy. Papa and I are going out for a little drive." "Me too," would burst from his lips, accompanied by a tremendous howl. His sister would say, "I want you boys to behave this evening, I'm going to have company in the parlor." "Me too," would come in the infallible refrain.

Now, I perceive that you are all smiling at this irrepressible youngster. You may be surprised when I tell you that I have not introduced him to-

night to be laughed at but to be patterned after. I have come before you, not to say "Me too" as a quotation expressing a trait which I despise, but to say it and to sound it, to repeat it and to rehearse it, as my own sentiment. And I hope I may be able to do this in so convincing a manner, that at the close of this address I shall have part of this audience saying "Me too" as emphatically as I say it myself, and the other half acknowledging that we have a perfect right and just reason to say it. Perhaps you will divine my purpose when I explain that, if I succeed in dividing this audience into these two parts, one of them will be composed entirely of women and the other exclusively of men.

What does our small boy mean when he says, "Me too?" Simply this, that somebody else has possessions or is enjoying privileges that he thinks he has a right to share in; or, whether he has that right or not, he is at least certain that he has a desire for such share.

Now, when I divided this audience so that the men and women in it were opposed to each other, I certainly did not put myself on the men's side. I am standing on woman's side. We as women are saying "Me too." At whom do you suppose we are saying it? At the only ones who are not women, and that of course means the men.

To make few words of the whole case, the matter is simply this, that we women think that the men have long been in exclusive possession of certain desirable fields and in the enjoyment of certain desirable privileges, in which we know that we have a desire to share, and in whose possession and enjoyment we are fully convinced that we have a perfect right to participate. What these fields and privileges are, and why we have this desire for representation in them, and why we think we have this right, I shall now proceed to show.

In the first place, as to what are the fields and privileges I have in mind, there can be little questioning. You all know from long experience with the customs and institutions of the present days what they are. Still, it behooves me to mention them. Let us in the first instance look at the professions and occupations. Why should not women be allowed to enter them on a perfect equality with men? But what are the facts in the case? I will read you some United States statistics of 1870. In that year women had finally succeeded in entering into the professions and occupations to the following extent: There were five hundred and twenty-seven doctors, twenty-four dentists, five lawyers, sixty-seven preachers, one architect, four hundred and twelve sculptors and painters, one hundred and

fifty-nine writers, thirty-five journalists, five thousand seven hundred and thirty-five musicians, six hundred and ninety-two actresses, seven shorthand writers, eight thousand and sixteen secretaries and clerks, that were women. There were no female book-keepers, nor any such surveyors and engineers. Compare these figures with those which tell how many men were active in these various pursuits, and you will all acknowledge that the number of women mentioned is indeed insignificant and paltry.

Leaving these fields, let us ask what has been woman's position in the state, the church, and the family. It has always been a subordinate one. She has not been allowed to preach, except in very rare instances, and only by certain denominations. She has not had a vote in the management of church affairs. She has not been allowed to hold office in the state, and her way to the ballot-box has been barred; while in the family she has been told that the man is the head and the ruler, and that she must be subject to him in everything.

The same lack of freedom is seen in her very dress. Whenever she makes the least approach to dress-reform, she is assailed with the cry of "man-nishness," whatever that may be.

But why mention any more? It must surely be

plain to you all that men have been occupying almost exclusively just those fields, and for that reason enjoying almost exclusively just those privileges, which are most desirable to us as intelligent human beings. This requires no further proof. It is true that the figures for the year 1880 would show a marked increase over those of 1870, but they do not show so large a gain that we are ready to stop crying "Me too." And when it is remembered that what we have gained has been stubbornly contested inch for inch, it will readily be noticed that the enemy has not been put to rout by any means. No, there is still room and reason for crying "Me too."

But have we a right to do so? What shall determine whether we have or not? A few questions may serve to lead us to a fair understanding of this part of the subject. I ask in the first place, how can it be proved that men alone have a right to enter these fields? Where are their letters-patent? Where are their land grants? Where is their authority to prohibit immigration into the territory they occupy? Instead of asking whether we women have a right to enter these fields, let us rather ask why we have no right there. Let us throw the burden of the proof on the other parties to the controversy. They boast of their su-

perior strength and ability. Let them prove these by furnishing an answer to this question, Why does the field belong entirely to them?

As a second question I will ask, Is woman not able to bear the burdens that these callings would lay upon her? Is her mind too weak? Is her insight not keen enough? Is her enterprise not daring enough? Are her reasoning powers too slow of action? It is almost an insult to put these questions to an intelligent audience. Everyone who has observed the movements of woman's mind knows that in many of these respects it is the superior of man's, and in most of the others its equal. And as to woman's purity in morals, a thing so much to be desired in political life, what man of them all does not blush for shame at the very suggestion of a comparison of the moral traits of the average political promoter, to whom is delegated the management of campaigns, with those of his friends among womankind? Yet, to these pure-minded women he says, "You have no right to enter politics." Again, as to the earnestness and faithfulness required for a proper administration of the office of the holy ministry, are these not just those traits for which women in all ages have been famed? And what of that tenderness and sympathy that are so indispensable to the preacher and

pastor? Are they not the inborn characteristics of every woman? Even now I have not yet mentioned her wonderful natural aptness to teach.

Give me woman's pity, and I will show you the fittest physician. Give me woman's eye for beauty and grace, and I will show you the fittest painter and sculptor. Give me woman's understanding in matters of human nature, and I will show you the fittest writer. And so on throughout the list.

In short, show me what a man is able to do, and for woman I will say, "Me too." Show me what he has a right to do, and again I will say, "Me too." Tell me what he has a right to wear, and I will say, "Me too." Tell me what he has a right to enjoy, and I will repeat, "Me too."

And I wish from the depths of this "Me too" heart of mine, that in the near future every woman in all this world would, to the utter discomfiture of men, join in the glorious chorus, and march triumphant down the centuries that yet lie before us, shouting with might and invincible determination, "*Me too.*"

Women, let us stand together and fight this battle for our rights. If we do, believe me, it will not long be the battle cry, "Me too," but will soon be the song of victory, "Me too."

CHAPTER XII.

AN UNEXPECTED VOYAGE.

Our movements, even our important ones, are not always planned long beforehand. They cannot be, as we do not know the future. How often we, all of us, have wished that we might possess a faculty that would enable us to look into that wonderful future, which, before we reach it, seems to contain so much that is unprecedentedly attractive, but which, after we have been permitted to explore it, proves to be simply a repetition of what we have experienced a thousand times before in the past.

Indeed, the less we know of the treasures it holds in store for us, the happier this treasured store will make us. And the less we know of the burdens of sorrow and care that it will impose upon us, the easier these self-same burdens can be borne by us.

A previous certain knowledge of approaching delights fills us with anticipation of the pleasure that will arise from their enjoyment. Now, anticipation is a treacherous and a false-dealing thing, perhaps not so from willful malice, but from inno-

cent ignorance and from childish exuberance of spirit. It enriches us for the time being with advance drafts on the pleasure that is in store, but, when the time comes for the full realization of that pleasure, we find the store sadly depleted through the inroads made upon it by our hasty anticipation.

A previous certain knowledge of impending troubles fills us with anxious fears and forebodings of the pain that will be inflicted on us by their arrival. Now, these forebodings are fully as treacherous and deceitful as the anticipations of pleasure, of which we have spoken. And again I grant that they may be so not from malice or a desire to torture, but simply from ignorance and a foolish solicitude. They are veritable Job's comforters, and mercilessly magnify our sorrows.

So, whatever the motives of these feelings, we ourselves are in both cases the victims of their well-meant considerateness, and the effect ever is to dull us for the real pleasure's enjoyment and to weaken us for the bearing of the sorrow. And when it is said that there is more enjoyment in anticipation than there is in realization, the sentiment intended should be stated in this wise, that realizations anticipated do not cause us so much pleasure as do realizations not anticipated.

Corine and Helen had opportunity to reflect on

these things amply as the great steamer plowed its unwearied way through the placid waters of the Atlantic that summer, just one month after their graduation, with them both on board. They did so, too, no doubt, if not in the words which we have used, at least in the same train of meditation.

They had had no brilliant plans made for the summer following their last term at school. The only thing that was definitely settled was that they were to spend three weeks out on the old farm together. The prospect of these weeks was not in any manner exciting, yet they had both anticipated their visit to the farm with much pleasure. They were not girls that fed on excitement, although they would have relished a summer at Newport or at Saratoga or at Paris equally with the rest of us. Indeed, if the whole truth must be told, they rather envied Posey Berner, who had sailed away according to previous plans a week after commencement.

"It's a pity you and I couldn't go in Posey's stead," Corine had said to Helen several days after the memorable commencement day. They had been together every day since. To-day they had gone to the post-office for Mr. Doner, and they were just turning the corner to go down to the mill office, each with a promiscuous load of business letters, papers, circulars, and samples.

"I just know she will not appreciate the tour as you or I would, and if I do say so myself," Corine continued, as Helen did not venture any response to her first remark.

"Well, Corine, I must confess that I do feel a little naughty about it myself. It seems as if they were all going to enjoy a pleasant summer except you and me. Posey is going to Paris and Rome, Fannie and Milda are going to the seaside, Mary Charman is to visit her aunt at X. They say X. is a delightful place to spend the summer. Mary intends to take Ada Lansen with her. Those two girls are like sisters since Ada has boarded there three years. Even Jane expects to dissipate by taking a trip out to her brother's in Nebraska. And the boys, too. Tom told me yesterday that he and Jim Stevens and Willie Seeler and Hal Lee are arranging to camp out in the mountains with a fishing party five weeks, and you know Rob Hoodley is going on a trip all around the world. I declare, Corine, you and John Perkins and I are the only ones to stay here all summer, and you and I are the only ones who will care. John will not mind it—he's so interested in his growing business. But what use is there in worrying about it? That will not help us a particle, and we know it. Besides, we ought to be glad that the others

can go away to have a good time ; and we can hope that our turn will come later. Let's make the best of it. Here, I'll run in and give papa the mail, and then we'll take a row up the river."

"All right," said Corine ; but she sighed as she said it.

They soon got started, and, as the day had been quite warm, were agreeably refreshed by the light breeze that was blowing across the river. They were refreshed mentally as well as physically, and they soon forgot all about their feelings of disappointment at being the only stay-at-homes for the summer. They seemed very much interested in some topic of conversation, as they were talking in such low tones. Girls always do that. When boys grow really interested they talk louder. But with girls it is different. They lower the tone of their voices. For that reason I can not tell you much of the conversation that took place in the Oyster that warm afternoon in June. Only this one question and its answer :

"Then you think you like him as well as ever, Corine?"

"Like him as well as ever, Nellie? Why child, since that grand oration of his at graduation I just positively love him."

From the perfectly contented smile that glad-

dened Helen's fair face, it was quite evident that she felt not a trace of jealousy, and that when two years before she had, out on the self-same river and in the self-same boat, written the name of John Perkins on one of Corine's mother's visiting cards, she had given expression to a girl's passing fancy only. I say it was apparent that it had been but a passing fancy. That means as far as her heart's knowledge at this time went. What the future might bring she did not know. But then and there she sent a fervent prayer to Him that trieth the hearts, that she and her cousin Corine might never cross each other in the path where we mortals can least bear to find ourselves crossed.

As the girls returned toward the mill they noticed that Helen's father was standing on the landing-steps, evidently waiting for them. He held an open letter in his hand.

"Why, what can papa want?" said Helen. "He is so busy to-day, I know it must be important."

"Oh, I suppose he wants us to go down to the post-office with an answer to some letter that required immediate attention," said Corine.

"Yes, but don't you see? The letter he has in his hand is an open one," persisted Helen, and she began to row faster. "See, Corine, he is beckoning to us."

“Why, of course he is,” said her cousin, looking at her watch. “It’s only twenty minutes until the Fast Mail goes through, and he wants the letter to go by that. The open letter you see is the one he is answering. He was in so big a hurry when he ran out to see whether we were coming, that he forgot himself and caught it up along. You know you are always imagining romantic things.”

Corine still had her practical nature. Besides, she did not like to drop the subject they had been discussing. To have it end in a hasty trip down to the dirty dingy post-office along the hot, dusty street—this delightful ride with its delightful topic of conversation—was more than she could well endure patiently. She wished her father and her uncle would engage a new errand-boy instead of keeping the place open for the little fellow who was sick, and having their daughters run errands whenever they got near enough to be pressed into the service. She had been on the point of proposing another trip up the river, and was in danger of relapsing into that condition of semi-discontent in which we found both girls before their refreshing exercise.

As they rowed up to him now, they noticed that Mr. Doner was as excited as a child. His face was a perfect study. Corine began to think that she

had been mistaken after all. She certainly had, as was shown by the very first words that her uncle spoke.

"Girls," he said, "I have received important news from over the water. The probabilities are, that we will all have a trip across to old England, and in the very near future at that. I have not time to tell you all at present. I want you to take this letter home to mamma, Helen. She will understand what it means without any explanation on your part. When I get home after office hours I will tell you all about it. If we go, Corine, we shall expect to take you with us, for Helen would not enjoy the trip without you. You had better begin talking to your parents about it at once, but I do not anticipate that they will be difficult to persuade."

The girls were too bewildered to say a word. Grasping the wonderful letter, they hurried away, and did not find their tongues until they had reached Helen's home. Here, however, a great disappointment awaited them. Mrs. Doner had gone out to make some calls and would not return for at least half an hour, grandma said.

For three-quarters of an hour they had to content themselves with telling the wonderful news to grandma and the others, that is, as much of the

news as they themselves knew. When Mrs. Doner returned, they did not even wait for her to reach the house, but unceremoniously thrust the letter into her hand as she was coming up the walk. She hardly knew what to make of the wild, incoherent reception with which they assailed her, but she obediently read the letter, which was only a short note saying that it would be followed by a more explicit one in the next mail.

Mamma Doner smiled when she had read the letter, and kissed Helen and Corine. Then they began to bombard her with questions.

"What is it, mamma? What does it mean? When are we going? And O dear, what will we wear?" At all which Mamma Doner smiled happily, but said never a word. Helen soon noticed that they were getting no answers to their questions, so she stopped to say :

"Why, mamma, why don't you say something? Why don't you explain?"

"If you would stop long enough for me to crowd in a few words, I might make a little explanation," rejoined she.

"We'll solemnly promise to say not one word while you are telling us all about it, Aunt Emma," said Corine.

"Well, children, the 'all about it' that I have

to tell is very little and is only this, that I know papa would rather tell you about it himself. So you'll have to wait till he comes home ;" saying which, Mrs. Doner disengaged herself skillfully from their grasp and ran upstairs to get herself ready for tea, much to their surprise and disappointment.

They strolled about the lawn and impatiently awaited the arrival of Mr. Doner, all the while talking excitedly and making plans which showed that they knew absolutely nothing about a sea voyage.

Mr. Doner finally came, and after the evening meal had been despatched the girls led him into the library and said, "Now we can't wait a moment longer, so you'll just have to tell us."

Thus dictated to, Mr. Doner submitted laughing, and gave them the following explanation:

"You have both often heard me speak of my relatives in England. I have never explained to you, though, how it is that we, who are originally of German descent, happen to have any relatives in Great Britain. It came about in this way.

"My uncle, Brenner by name, was in the employ of a leading business house in Hamburg. This house had much exchange with brokers in London. It was finally deemed advisable to establish an

agency in London, and to manage this this uncle of mine, as one of the most experienced and most highly trusted employés of the firm, was selected. He did not like to leave his German fatherland, but, as the position was in the nature of a decided promotion, and as he had quite a knowledge of the English language, having often previously been in London, sometimes for weeks at one trip, transacting the business of the firm, he was the more readily reconciled to going, and accepted the position.

“He took charge of the agency and managed it with signal ability and success. Thus it came about that he was continued in the capacity of his firm’s London agent year after year. In the course of time he became perfectly reconciled to his new home and surroundings, and there was no noticeable trace of his German left except a slight imperfection in his English accent.

“His son, a boy of ten years when the family removed to Her Majesty’s kingdom, grew up an out-and-out Englishman. He embarked in business for himself and is now a thriving merchant. My uncle died, as you remember, eight years ago. Aunt Gretchen and the daughters returned to Germany on his death, but George continued his business in England ; and this Cousin George is the

kinsman about whom I have sometimes spoken to you. He is in business in a partnership company at Liverpool, and is getting along splendidly. Somehow or other, though he and I have seen each other but twice in our lives, once when I was quite a boy yet and went over with Grandpa Doner, and once shortly after Helen was born, when he had to run over to New York on business and came to spend two weeks with us, still we seem to have become close friends at the very outset of our acquaintance, and have always kept up a regular, if not a lively correspondence.

“About two years ago he wrote me about a business venture in which he expected to invest some capital, inviting me to join in the enterprise if I wished. At that time I happened to have some idle money, and, knowing him to be a solid business man and no wild speculator, I sent him quite a sum, with instructions to invest it for me as he himself thought best. He did this, and the venture has proved successful. He writes me, now, that very likely, indeed, he says ‘practically certainly,’ my presence will be required at a meeting of the stockholders in August.

“‘I will write you particulars more definitely by next American mail,’ he writes. ‘Shall see Trueman and Carberry when they return from India in

a day or two, and will inform you at once. You may as well prepare to come, however, as nothing short of a very unexpected turn in affairs will render your coming unnecessary. And now remember what I have written you a score of times before, that if you care to insure yourself a hearty English welcome you must bring a good part of the family with you. I want specially to see that little girl who came to make you so proud and happy that I hardly knew you last time I visited you, it must be now twenty years gone by, is it not?’

“Now you girls have the whole story in a nutshell, and you must run away while I attend to some writing. For, if we are to go, there are a thousand and one things that will demand my attention between now and our departure. So run along, and above all do not bother me with what you will have to wear. I am willing to pay all the bills Helen makes, and Uncle Joe will do the same by Corine if he decides to let her go. I expect John Perkins will be hauling whole dray-loads of dry-goods and millinery up here for the next two or three weeks, but you mustn’t bring the pattern-books and fashion-plates down to the mill office and ask us which is lovely, and which is elegant, and the like.” And Deacon Doner ended with his rare

heartly laugh, that laugh that made the old women who had known him as a boy say, "Just like old Squire Doner, for all the world."

The girls had their minds too full to protest against being sent away; so, answering only the last part of his speech by saying, "As if we ever did that!" they both threw their arms about his neck and nearly smothered him with kisses, then ran obediently away leaving him smiling over his work. He was never happier, this Deacon Doner, than when he had been able to do or to say something that made others happy.

Four days later another letter arrived from George Brenner, and it was definitely decided that they would make the voyage. They had no fears for the welfare of grandma and the children, as the aunts and uncles would be glad to welcome them, and the children had a standing invitation to come to the farm whenever they pleased and to stay as long as they liked.

The weeks that followed were busy weeks indeed. You can easily imagine what all there was to be arranged.

What troubled the girls most at first was to get the consent of Corine's parents. At the first mention of the plan they had been inclined to say "No," but there were too many against them and

they were soon forced to yield. What could they do against the united forces of the deacon, his wife, Helen, and their own Corine? So they consented sooner than they themselves had thought that they would.

"It will perhaps be Corine's only chance," said Mrs. Hereford, "for I do not expect ever to persuade myself to venture out on the ocean;" and, to the great delight of all concerned, it was decided that Corine should accompany the Doners.

Her happiness hardly knew bounds, but it was fully equaled by Helen's; for, unselfish creature that she was, she could not have enjoyed the trip with thoughts of Corine at home.

Mr. Doner had been about right in his estimate of the loads of millinery and dry-goods. It began to seem as if every corner of the old house had become a wardrobe.

"It's awful with you women," said Erwin. He was growing to be quite a man by this time, at least in his ways and ideas. "I believe Helen has a different dress for every city and village in the United Kingdom."

"Why, Erwin, how absurd," said she. "Don't you know that we women folks need different dresses? You know I have only nine new ones. Besides, who is the first one to criticise when a girl

is not dressed just so?" But he was out of earshot when she finished, knowing full well that it would be useless to argue the question.

Thus the days went by, the girls becoming busier every moment, and the boys tormenting them more and more every day. One evening when Erwin and Ralph had been extraordinarily full of tease, so that Helen and Corine finally promised them each a whole lot of foreign postage stamps, to be sent after they should reach England, if they would only quit teasing and leave, and the boys had accepted the offer and withdrawn, they both suddenly reappeared. The girls were absorbed, bending over the last "*Delineator*." They looked up and were about to call "Shame" on the ruthless promise-breakers, when Ralph said:

"Look here, Helen. Here is something we boys got for you." They were carrying an express package between them, making believe that it was too heavy for one alone.

The girls were inclined to believe that the boys were only joking, but the boys came ahead and laid the parcel on the table. What girl was ever known to resist the temptation to open a mysterious package? When the lid was off, and the paper packing removed, a cry of delight and astonishment escaped both the girls. There before them lay what had

caused Helen the most anxiety and trouble, a beautiful traveling ulster. She had not been able to suit herself in one at Riverton, or at Z., where they had gone to shop, and her mother had finally decided to risk taking time enough in New York to buy one before the boat sailed. These good-for-nothing teases had heard all about it, and, calling in the aid of the leading dry-goods man of the town, had secretly carried out a plan with this result. Helen was completely overcome.

"I'll never say again that boys are good for nothing, and that they know nothing about women's dresses," she almost sobbed; and the boys felt so embarrassed at their perfect success, that they hastily said "Good night," and were gone before the girls could call in Mrs. Doner to admire the surprise.

With like pleasures and kindnesses the busy days were filled. Friends "dropped in" to make farewell calls, dress-makers and seamstresses came and went, express carriers bustled in and out, and never in their lives had the Doners lived through such an excitement and flurry.

"It's positively exhilarating," declared the Deacon, "I wish it could last always."

"Why, papa," said Helen, "we could never stand it."

She was right. For when, three days before the time set for the departure, the last stitch had been taken, the last strap drawn, the last everything, in short, attended to, they all found themselves extremely grateful for the few days of rest allotted to them, and began to discover how tired they really were.

Then these three days passed, and there came the last partings and farewells, the last admonitions and instructions, the last tears and kisses, and the travelers were flying along toward New York on the Fast Mail.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW FRIENDS.

SOMEWHAT to Corine's disappointment the voyage was made without their encountering any danger. She had hoped that at least a storm or two would attack the ship, and would have welcomed a fleet of icebergs. But nothing in the nature of storm or berg approached them.

The voyage was not, however, lacking in interest for either of the girls. They enjoyed every moment of the week, from the minute the great ship left her moorings at New York to the time when she sighted Liverpool. The wonderful ship itself, the people on board, the sailors, the captain, the vast blue sea, they all came in promiscuously for their share of the attention of these two young ladies. So interested were they in all they saw that Mr. and Mrs. Doner found their greatest pleasure in observing the girls' happiness.

It cannot be said, though, that the party were sorry when they found that the ship was nearing the land. Equipped with glasses loaned by the

captain, the observant eyes of the girls had already discovered objects of interest on the shore; and, what with the excitement always attendant on an ocean liner's arrival in port, the parting from the ship was accomplished without tears or any considerable sadness.

On landing, they were immediately taken in charge by a gentleman who seemed to be of about Mr. Doner's age, and who, moreover, seemed to be entirely satisfied with Mr. Doner's company, for he paid no attention whatever to any of the others, and did pay most decided attention to him. The girls and Mrs. Doner began to think that the good deacon had fallen into the grasp of some adventurous confidence man. But after a while the two gentlemen turned around, and Mr. Doner said:

"Why, George, we are forgetting all about the women-folks."

"True enough," said the cheery voice of his companion; and then, as he grasped Mrs. Doner's hand, he went on, "Cousin Emma, welcome to old England. As for these young ladies, Frank, I think you shall have to introduce me to their acquaintance, for I feel rather embarrassed to hail them as I had expected to do. You know, I had an image of two little school-girls in my mind, but I declare, here are two fine young women."

"Now, Cousin George," said Helen, taking his hand and giving him a warm kiss, "you mustn't pretend that we are strangers, for I feel that we have always known each other, since you and papa are such chums."

Corine, of course, did not feel herself free to make so informal and, as she thought it, so undignified an entrance into the acquaintance of a gentleman whom she had never met before. Her greeting was none the less friendly, however, and with lively chat and conversation they entered the coach that stood in waiting, and were driven at once to Mr. George Brenner's handsome residence.

The fine house was beautifully situated in a large grove of tall old trees, and stood some distance from the thoroughfare. The drive wound in a wide sweep through the trees up to the broad terrace that crossed the whole front of the house. The location was an exceedingly attractive one, being not far from the boulevard that led out to Prince's Park.

"Oh, what an elegant place!" cried Corine. "I believe you will be sorry you invited us, Cousin George; we will not want ever to leave again."

"All the more agreeable to me," said her cousin, gallantly. "Nothing could please me more than to keep you all here a long time as members of the

family. The old house seems rather dreary since Ellen is married and the boys are both gone to India."

"I am afraid we American girls would not suit, though," suggested Helen.

"Oh, don't say that," responded her cousin. "I am already prepared to endorse what my neighbor Chamberlain is always arguing, that the American girls are sweeter and brighter than our own."

"What makes him think that?" asked Helen.

"Oh, he is in a position to judge capably. He has been in the States dozens of times, and has frequently spent a half year there at a trip."

"Chamberlain," said Corine, meditatively; "that name seems familiar to me, somehow or other."

"Yes," said Mr. Doner, "you are undoubtedly thinking of Mr. Chamberlain whom you met in the office at the mill once—let me see, it must be over two years ago. I wonder whether this could be the same person."

"Is he tall and distinguished-looking?" asked Corine.

"Yes, he is," said Cousin George. "He is often mistaken for a nobleman, and, indeed, to say truth, he is a noble man, as noble as men are made."

"What is his given name?" asked Mr. Doner.

"Rodney," said George.

"Well, I do believe it is the same," said the deacon. "But it is queer that we never mentioned to each other our mutual acquaintance with you, George. I have met him often and have had numerous business transactions with him, but neither of us has ever mentioned you."

"That is not so surprising as it seems, Frank. You undoubtedly did business with him as a London broker, did you not?"

"Yes, that's true. The address was London, and I suppose he never happened to mention that he resided at Liverpool."

"Well, here we are," said George, as the coach drew up at the block. "Now, let us disembark, and let me welcome you to the house. We can continue the subject of Mr. Chamberlain at some other time. He will be certain to call some evening soon, and you will have an opportunity of judging for yourselves by sight whether he is your acquaintance or not;" and Mr. Brenner sprang to the ground with the agility of a boy, and began assisting them to alight.

Mrs. Cousin George met them at the door, and repeated the cordial welcome of her husband, and in a short time they had all removed the signs of travel and fatigue, and were resting comfortably,

"just as though we were at home," Helen remarked.

That very evening, as they were enjoying the air on the terrace after tea, a tall and stately figure appeared, walking toward them up the path.

"That is our Mr. Chamberlain," said Helen. "Does he know that you were expecting friends from America, Cousin George?"

"No, I think not. He has been absent from his home here for about six weeks, and returned only yesterday. I saw him at the Exchange this morning, but had only a few minutes' talk with him, and that was on business. So I did not have occasion to mention your coming."

"Then please do not tell him who we are; and papa, you move away. I want to see whether he will recognize me. You know what a 'fuss' he made over me when he visited us that time, and how he urged me to drop in at his office if we ever came to England. I remember yet that I said, 'Why, Mr. Chamberlain, in a month's time you will have forgotten that there ever was a person called Helen Doner. You are so occupied with your business affairs, and you see so many new faces every day;' and he said, 'Miss Helen, if you walk into my office on Lombard street at the busiest hour of the day ten years from now I shall rec-

ognize you.' It was very gallant of him, and I felt awfully flattered, but I am rather skeptical as to his ability to fulfill his promise."

Mr. Doner quietly withdrew and busied himself examining some shrubs that were flowering near the end of the terrace. The caller had by this time approached, and, lifting his hat gracefully and dignifiedly to them all, he paused and looked inquiringly at George Brenner, evidently expecting to be presented. He wondered that his usually so ready host made no move in that direction. Then he came a step closer and scanned the group once more, thinking perhaps he had mistaken friends for strangers. Helen began to triumph and was preparing to enjoy his discomfiture at failing to recognize her, when he caught sight of her animated face.

"Well, well," he cried, "well, well. Miss Helen, how do I happen on the extreme pleasure of meeting you here, right in the midst of our dear old Liverpool, and under the roof of my good friend Brenner? And this is Miss Corine, your cousin, is it not? And, madame, I beg your pardon, the shade of these trees was too much for my old eyes this evening. They are getting rather weak, although Harry tells me I can see as well as ever. Is your husband here, Mrs. Doner?" and the old gen-

tleman took a chair that stood vacant at Helen's right.

There was no use for Mr. Doner's keeping himself hidden any longer, so he came forward, and the two exchanged cordial greetings, and then there was a general laugh at Helen's expense.

"Now, George," said Mr. Chamberlain, "I want you to explain these things at once. Do you think this is fair treatment of a poor old neighbor who never in his life did you an evil turn?" and the old gentleman's eyes twinkled brightly. He drew his chair a little nearer to Helen's, and looked at her with an expression of extreme delight.

"Well, sir," laughed George, "seeing that you have so shamefully neglected your neighbors for six or eight weeks, do you think that they could well keep you informed? Besides, how was I to know that you had any acquaintance with my kinsfolk across the Atlantic?"

"Kinsfolk? Do you mean to tell me that my old friend Doner is a kinsman of yours?"

"Not only a kinsman, but the very best friend; although it is true that we have met each other only twice in our lives before this day."

"Well, well," ejaculated his neighbor. "What strange things do happen right under our very noses. Well, well!"

The evening was spent in happy converse, and it was late when Mr. Chamberlain left and the company retired for the night. He had told them that he expected them to spend as much time with him as they spent with his neighbor George.

"If Harry were only here," he said at leaving; "I have told him so many things about the wonderful women of America, and here he is missing the chance of seeing the very finest that America can boast. The boy is a regular American himself. He has never gone across, because I have always feared if I once let him go he would never return. It's wonderful with the fellow. He is a great student of government, and has become an out-and-out republican. He thinks more of your presidents than of all our kings and queens combined. Well, well, it's too bad, too bad. Here he is off on that miserable cruise on the Mediterranean, and no way of knowing where to reach him. I shall send out a few messages to different ports this very night, however, and I think that in a week or two I can have him here. The boy must meet you."

"Do you really mean to spoil his summer's cruise just for the sake of having him meet a few wild Americans?" questioned Helen, in genuine astonishment.

"Why certainly," answered he. "The boy would never forgive me if I failed to do it." And the good old man wished them a good night, and strode off with the firm determination of doing all that he had said.

The days that followed were spent as you can all imagine they were. There were dinners and teas, and walks and drives, and excursions and sight-seeings. George Brenner was a thorough host, and spared no pains to make every moment of the visit pleasant for his guests. The efforts of Mr. Chamberlain were not less constant. He accompanied them wherever they went, and they had no desire to go without him. His only request was that they defer some of their excursions until Harry came back. To this they all willingly assented, arranging to postpone their out-of-town excursions until after his return.

So they drove in Prince's park, and on out to Sefton park, and to Wavertree park with its fine botanic gardens and its wonderful palm-house, the like of which they had never seen. They became acquainted with the Exchange, and the old Town hall, and St. George's hall, and with every other building of interest. They visited the docks, and drove out into the country districts. Often they gathered on the lawn at Mr. Chamberlain's, where

was a fine tennis court, and passed the hours in the healthful exercise of that exhilarating outdoor game.

At all these times Mr. Chamberlain was Helen's companion. He actually asserted that he had a greater right to her than her own father had. "For," said he, "he has your mother to bear him company, and both my two girls and their dear mother are dead and gone."

There was only one thing to mar the perfect happiness of this fine old man. That was that he had not had any response from Harry. It was almost two weeks now since he had sent out those first messages, and he had sent others since then; but no answer from Harry reached him. At last one morning, just as the company were leaving the breakfast room at Brenners', Mr. Chamberlain came in, excitedly waving a bit of paper.

"Well, well," said he, without waiting to say "good morning;" "listen to this message which I have just received from London:

"Dear Father: Could not reach London as soon as I stated in letter from Venice, owing to loss of important luggage. Will reach Liverpool tomorrow by London and North Western. Meet me earliest train.'"

"When is that?" asked Helen.

"In three hours," said he, consulting his time-piece. "I wish it were only three minutes."

The three hours passed as quickly as hours that have sixty minutes to make up usually do, although this impatient father insisted that they were the longest hours he had lived for a long while. He strode up and down the platform at the station fully three-quarters of an hour before the train was due, and consulted his time-keeper so often, that a group of young men near-by thought he must be expecting a kingdom to arrive for him on the coming train.

The girls were at home arranging their hair and their dresses, and speculating about the new arrival.

"I wonder what he is like," said Helen. "I just know I will not like him, and I'm afraid I will show it, and I do dislike to offend dear old Mr. Chamberlain."

"Well, I do pity you," replied Corine. "Mr. Chamberlain has been making so much of you that you will simply have to pretend you like the boy, whether he strikes your fancy or not. I wonder whether he is as boyish as his father's talk would lead a person to believe."

"I am sure I don't know, Corine. I have given the youth very little thought; only enough to save

myself from appearing rude whenever his father has introduced him as the subject of our conversation. But look here! Why are we up here primping away for dear life, just as though we expected to appear at court and to be presented to her majesty? Let's call this good enough, eh?"

"No sir, Nellie. We might as well go on now. Mr. Harry may bring some young duke with him that's worth dressing for. What do you intend to wear? And we had better be quick about it, too, for it's train time now, and I know the old gentleman will bring his darling little boy up here the first thing."

So they arrayed themselves in their very prettiest dresses, and, when they appeared below, Cousin George slyly said, "I wonder which one it will be."

"Why, Cousin George, do you really think that boy will make any difference to us?" said Helen.

"Or we to him!" added Corine. "Likely as not he'll look at us about a second, and then want to go home and have a romp with his dog, or feed his pet rabbits."

"I'll tell him that," said Cousin George, smiling mysteriously.

"Yes, do," said Corine. He said nothing more, and they swept out on the terrace.

When the train drew into the station, Mr. Chamberlain eagerly scanned the occupants of each coach as the compartments were opened. He soon descried his son. The meeting was an affectionate one.

"Well, well," said the father, "how you have kept me in a worry for two weeks. You're looking well, Harry, my boy. You're looking fine, sir."

"Worried because you didn't receive my letter in reply to your message at Venice?"

"Yes, sir. How do you know that I did not receive any letter?"

"Why, father, after telegraphing to you immediately after my arrival in London last night, I went to the office. Bleeker was still there, and he had a message for me from Jack Reefer. I had given him my letter to you at Venice, as he was going ashore that evening, and here he telegraphed me from Rome that he forgot to post my letter and did not discover it in his pocket till yesterday noon."

"Well, well! That's like that harum-scarum Jack. But there, get into the coach, boy."

"Isn't it sort of queer to call a fellow off a Mediterranean cruise to meet two American school-girls, father?"

"Yes, it is, Harry, my boy; yes, it is. And if

you want to go back and finish the cruise, you have my consent. All I ask is that you stay with us two or three days. We are all going down to London, and from there on to Paris, and you can go with us, and then go and join the other boys again if you like, and finish the cruise with them."

"That will suit me exactly, father. I'll just forward Jack a message to-day, informing him to that effect."

"Well, well, do as you like, boy. Do you want to go home first, or shall we go directly to Brenners'?"

"Suit yourself, father."

"Tom," said Mr. Chamberlain, "take us to George Brenner's, and be quick about it."

"Yes, sir," said the coachman, and they were on the way at once.

The girls were still on the terrace. They were surprised to see the coach approaching with two tall gentlemen seated within.

"Well," said Helen slowly, "which is Mr. Chamberlain, I wonder."

"They both are, Nellie," said Corine, laughing. "But isn't it fortunate that we fixed up as we did?"

Helen thought so, as she blushinglly acknowledged the graceful bow which Harry was bestow-

ing upon her when his proud father was presenting him. A handsomer young man she had never seen. She understood at a glance why his father was proud of him.

As for Harry, he was wishing that they had driven to his home first, so that he might have appeared in more presentable dress.

Corine's impression is most easily described in her own words. As Harry and his father stepped inside to meet the others, she whispered in an aside to Helen: "Isn't he just divine?"

"Mustn't say that, Corine."

"Well, 'grand' then, if that's better."

"Yes, that is better. And now I perfectly agree with you. He *is* grand."

The "grand" "boy" soon reappeared, and they launched out into a sprightly conversation with him. From that moment on, the life and pleasure of the visit seemed to be doubled.

Mr. Chamberlain soon appeared and said, "Harry, I shall send Tom back with the horses, and we will walk home when we are ready. Do you wish to have him drive down and attend to that message for you?"

"O no, father. We will have to go down this evening at any rate, and I can attend to it then myself. There is no special haste required."

They went down to the city that evening, and as they started home Mr. Chamberlain said: "Well, well, Harry. We're forgetting that message."

"Don't worry about that, father," quoth Harry. "I shall attend to that to-morrow."

The next evening, as they were slowly driving home after a long trip with their friends out to the Chamberlains' country villa, the old man once more broached the subject. He had no desire that Harry should leave again, but he was a strict business man, and, when there was any business that required attention, he could not rest until it had been disposed of.

"Harry," he began, "about that message"—

"Now, father," interrupted Harry. "Let us not say anything more about that for the present. I'll promise to send it in good season." And so the subject was dropped.

Some of the former drives had to be taken over again, with Harry as an addition to the party. It was noticeable that the elder Chamberlain devoted himself almost exclusively to Corine, while his son took his father's accustomed place at Helen's side.

The trip to London, and from there on to Paris, was one continual pleasure. Never had a more congenial party "done" the sights in these two

cities. Day followed day without their taking any note of time, until one evening Mr. Chamberlain said with a sigh, "Two days more, and we leave Paris for home. Harry, my boy, when do you start to join the boys again? And where do you want your luggage forwarded?"

"Why, father, hadn't I told you that I had decided not to join them again?"

"Well, well," answered his father; "but what will Jack think?"

"Oh, Jack will think nothing at all about it. He is not expecting me, as far as I know."

"Well, well," ejaculated the old man. "Didn't he receive your message?"

"No, father. And that for the simple reason that I did not send him any."

"You scamp," frowned his delighted father; "And here I've been grieving about parting again. What has happened to change your plans?"

"Well, you see, I don't exactly care to chase around after the fellows; and besides, Mark Huntley wants me to make that Irish tour with him in October, so I think that will make enough traveling for me this year, don't you?"

"Yes, sir; yes I do," assented his father with much force; and Harry strolled down the hotel steps to join the girls, who were just returning

from a shopping trip with Mrs. Brenner and Mrs. Doner.

Harry returned with them when the time for departure from Paris came, and there were two weeks more of unalloyed pleasure at Liverpool. Then the time allotted to the visit was up. With many regrets expressed on all sides because of the termination of what had been the most delightful summer any of them had ever spent, the Doner party took leave of their kind hosts; and they were soon again out on the deep. Harry and his father had promised to "run over" and spend the Christmas holidays with them, and the Brenners expected to make the voyage once more in the following spring. These prospects made the parting a little less sad. But still the first few days out were very quiet ones for the young folks. Then the weather grew stormy, and Corine was taken down with a terrible spell of sea-sickness. She with her sufferings, and Helen with nursing her, had other things to occupy their minds than the thoughts of parting from their dear English friends. And when, at last, Sandy Hook was sighted, the girls were their old selves once more, with the exception that they had a hardier and a healthier color even than usual. And so they returned home, and took up their accustomed life anew.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOME AGAIN.

WHILE the travelers had been enjoying themselves in England, Corine's parents had been preparing a surprise for her. One of the first things she learned on her return was that her father and mother had decided to send her to college to study law for two years. Her delight on receiving this welcome intelligence knew no limits. She skipped and danced around like a child with its first doll.

It had long been her wish to educate herself more highly than could be done through the Riverton High School course, and "law" was her hobby. But her father had always objected to any plans looking toward the realization of these dreams, and during her last year at High School she had said nothing more to him on the subject. While she was gone her mother had finally persuaded him to consent, and so it had been decided that she should enter the junior year at —— College after Christmas. This she could readily do, as the Riverton High School course was sufficiently

advanced, and she had done considerable outside study.

She now determined to persuade her uncle to let Helen accompany her and take the same course at college. But she could not move him an inch.

“Helen has a good sensible education now,” he said, “as good an education as she will ever need to fill the place which the Lord assigns to her in this life. She has more of an education than her mother, and if she makes some good man half as good a wife as her mother has been one to me, she will be doing more good than all the special education in the world can fit her to do. You know how I stand on that question, Corine, and you know that Helen heartily agrees with me. As for studying law, it is as evident to me as anything can be that the Lord did not intend for women to be doctors and dentists and lawyers and ministers. The Word of God is clearly outspoken on those points. God’s mission for women is immeasurably higher than these callings—the glorious mission of wifehood and motherhood. Now, I know what you want to tell me, that knowing and practicing these other things does not make a woman a poorer wife or mother. But what I say is this, that by crowding all these things into a woman’s mind you crowd them into her heart. For in woman heart is al-

ways the ruling feature, and we may thank God that it is. A woman's heart is in everything she undertakes. If, now, you crowd these things into a woman's heart, you must necessarily crowd out her domestic instincts, and when you do that you are working ruin that will reach further than most people stop to consider. Besides, let me tell you something that Professor Scranton said at the last meeting of the Board of Education. He said that woman's mind is constituted entirely different from man's mind, and needs an entirely different development. He said this in support of retaining the new plans of study which he introduced into our course here a few years ago, and which he introduced to meet the demands made by this very difference. And I am sure he is right on this question. You are going to a college where the original object was to educate young men only. When it was decided to admit young women, the course was hardly changed at all. Essentially it remained the same as it had formerly been. You will find a similar fault in most of our so-called female colleges. Their courses are planned closely after the courses of the male colleges. Indeed, it is their chief boast that they equip young women just the same as young men are equipped. The worst calamity that I could imagine for Helen would be that she should lose

her womanliness, even if by sacrificing it she could gain a renown before all the world, and seem to do thousands an incalculable benefit. I have always held that the only way to please God is to be true in the sphere which He has assigned to us. Pleasing Him is the only worthy object of any life."

The deacon had spoken with warmth. He was fully conscious of the fact that he was condemning the very step that Corine was so proudly taking; but he had more of an object in view than simply that of informing her why he could not accede to her wish and allow Helen to accompany her to college. The far-seeing man had often feared that Corine, whom he loved almost as dearly as one of his own children, would make her later life, or at least a goodly portion of it, miserable for herself and others. He thought it not unkind to warn her against taking this step.

He had spoken to her mother, but without any success at all. She had summarily called him an old foggy, and had intimated, not gently, that if they wished to educate their daughter it concerned nobody but themselves.

The deacon's words were not without effect on Corine. When he finished she was crying, and she was quite angry. She made no response, but cried until she could control her tears, and then, simply

saying, "Good night, uncle," she slipped out of the room.

Her uncle knew that on more deliberate consideration of his words she would understand that he had spoken from love, and not to offend her. He simply called after her, "Good-bye, Corine ; think over what I have said, and don't be offended at me."

It is, perhaps, needless to say that the preparations for Corine's two years at college went on just the same.

Mr. Hereford agreed perfectly with his brother-in-law, although he held his views from somewhat different motives. But in this instance the decision was according to Mrs. Hereford's will. She was gratified with the advanced views that had already taken so firm a hold on her daughter's mind, and she conceived it to be her duty to encourage them, no matter what became of the womanly traits of her character in the meantime.

Harry Chamberlain and his father reached Riverton a week before Christmas. The sleighing was excellent that winter, and the skating likewise, so there was no lack of amusement. Besides, the great city of Z. was only thirty miles distant, and with its population already at one hundred and thirty-seven thousand it made a splendid

objective point for pleasure-seekers, especially as excursion trains were run whenever any attraction of considerable merit was billed for that city.

The Doners were not theatre-goers, but they rarely missed a good concert or a lecture. So their ways of entertaining their guests were by no means poor.

Harry and his father both declared that life in the little village was charming. Mr. Chamberlain even went as far as to say that when he retired from active business life, he would remove to America and settle down in Riverton.

"You are perfectly safe in saying that, father," said Harry, "for the very plain reason that you will never retire. You are far and away past the age at which most men retire now, and if I am any judge you are still good for a number of years."

It did really seem so, for the old man was as hale and hearty as Harry, to all appearances, and he joined in their sports with as much vigor as the young folks themselves displayed. Helen and Corine were both expert skaters, and they coaxed the old gentleman into a race with them one fine afternoon. Harry also joined, and away they swept. Judge of their surprise, when, the course having not yet been half covered, Harry's father was far enough in the lead to make it entirely certain and plain that he would win.

What a grand thing it would be if our young men of the present day would remember that God requires of them that they keep themselves in good physical health. What with gin and whisky on the one hand and pie and cake on the other, with ambitious overwork in the one case and indolent idleness in the other, our young forces are regularly weakened before they reach the age when they should stand in their prime.

It had been decided that the Christmas decorations should be a combination of the German and the English. There was to be an old-fashioned German tree, but with it English holly in profusion. Helen had also written to Mr. Chamberlain, without the knowledge of the others, asking him to bring some English mistletoe with him. He appreciated the request so thoroughly that he did not tell even Harry about it. So no one except the two conspirators knew that the space beneath the chandelier in the front parlor was to be a dangerous spot, and Helen had resolved to avoid it carefully.

What an air of mystery did pervade that house as the day drew nearer. At last it came. The clock had hardly finished striking five that Christmas morning when the whole household were aroused by the deacon. They assembled in the front parlor, wishing each other a "Merry Christ-

mas," and beaming with that wondrous joy that comes to us at Christmas-tide alone.

Suddenly, by some system of scheming known only to good Deacon Doner, the doors opening into the back parlor were flung back, and there before their dancing eyes stood a brilliant sparkling Christmas tree, set against a background of holly, bright with its glowing red berries. There was much in the detail of the tree's decoration to be admired, and the deacon was overwhelmed with congratulations on his success.

While the tapers were shining their brightest, Mr. Doner beckoned Helen to the piano. They all gathered around her and filled the rooms with the sound of joyous Christmas carols. Then the deacon read those words, so old, yet ever new, the story of the Christ-child's birth, as it has been recorded by the inspired Luke. After this there followed a heart-felt prayer, then a few more Christmas songs. Then came the benediction.

The close of this sweet service found Harry Chamberlain and his father both in tears; for different reasons, however. Mr. Chamberlain was a stanch and faithful member of the Anglican Church. He knew what he believed, and believed it from a strong inward conviction.

Harry had been duly instructed and confirmed,

but after his mother's death he had grown very careless about matters of faith. He did not sink into a gross, immoral life, by any means ; but he began to doubt the doctrines which he had been taught as being the Word of God. When these doubts began to assail him, he made no efforts to banish them. He was at college, and moving in a set of young men who would have been ashamed to discuss a doctrine, or even to entertain a serious religious thought. Thus he had drifted away from the moorings where his mother had been so happy to see his life's vessel secured. And, although not an outspoken infidel, yet he could not have been said any longer to possess much faith in the God of the Bible.

His father had seen this change with a sad, sad heart. He had a certain hope that Harry would return to his faith as soon as the right thing happened, in God's mercy, to lead him back again; and he was certain that this same thing would eventually happen. But he had waited many, many, weary, weary months for it, and it seemed as far away as ever. As he sat there with bowed head, listening to that sweet Christmas music, tears began to steal softly down his cheeks. He thought of Harry's mother, and of his own dear daughters, who had passed away so soon after their mother's

death. He thought of Harry, and, as he thought of him, he involuntarily looked up at his face. How his heart leaped. There, on Harry's handsome face, was that soft and gentle look that used to be there when his mother talked to him of sacred things, and Harry's eyes were as full of tears as his father's.

They all attended service later in the forenoon at St. Luke's. It was a magnificent offering on the altar of the Lord God, this service of prayer and praise, of song and sermon, and Mr. Chamberlain was certain that He who had begun the good work in his boy was continuing it. Would Harry allow it to be finished?

That afternoon they were all to drive out to the Doner farm, to stay there for a good old-fashioned Christmas dinner. They had rigged up one of the mill wagons on "bobs," and it would afford room for all but two of the party. Mr. Chamberlain and Helen were accordingly to drive out in the cutter with Helen's pony attached. At the last moment the old gentleman changed his mind, saying that he wanted to join the load in the "bob," and that Harry could take his place in the cutter. Helen would have objected if she could well have done so, but the old gentleman was accustomed to having his own way with her, so there was little use in raising objections.

They were gliding over the smooth road now, the big load ahead and the cutter a few rods behind, but out of earshot from it.

"Who were those young girls that came to you after the service this morning and presented you the Bible dictionary, Miss Helen?" said Harry after they had fairly started.

"Oh, those were the scholars of my Sunday-school class," answered Helen.

"Do you mean to say that you teach a class in the Sunday-school?"

"Certainly. Why shouldn't I?"

"Well, most of the girls I have ever met would object on the ground of its taking too much time. You know, a young miss just beginning to enjoy life can hardly be expected to devote the time she should have for her toilet, and calls, and receptions and things, to theology."

"You talk just like Corine, Mr. Chamberlain. I am sure that I have never noticed that my Sunday-school work took away any of the time that belonged to other affairs. Besides, if it did, it would make no difference with me. It is surely our duty to pay a proper share of our attention to religious work."

"But isn't it as well to leave those matters to the older people?"

“Mr. Chamberlain, if I profess to be a Christian, and fail to do a Christian’s duty, how can I respect myself? I would rather be a professed unbeliever than to be a hypocrite.”

“That is true enough. But what I mean is that it is just as well to leave the whole matter of religion to our later years in life. It seems to me there is something in youth that is not compatible with faith, and at the same time there is something in the experience that comes with older years that is necessary to true religion.”

“I see what is the trouble with you, Mr. Chamberlain. There is most assuredly something that is antagonistic to faith in the heart of the young. But you are mistaken if you think that same enemy is not found in the heart as it grows older. As for certain experiences that are necessary before we can truly and earnestly believe, you are again quite right. But they are not the experiences that necessarily come with age. They are the experiences that we have when God’s Word is leading us to a knowledge of our sins and to repentance on their account. I am afraid your whole idea of religion is a false one. You seem to regard it as a philosophical theory for the mind, whereas it is a divine revelation for the soul.”

“I wish I could believe that, Miss Helen.”

"Believe what?"

"Well, that the Bible is a direct revelation from God."

"Why, Mr. Chamberlain, do you not believe in the Bible?"

"Yes, I think I do. But I am convinced that I do not believe it as you do, both from what you say in regard to the Bible, and from the effect of your convictions as seen in your life."

"Well, what is your faith in God?"

"Now, Miss Helen, I am afraid you are trying to put me into the pulpit." Harry was beginning to wish that the talk on this subject had not run into so thorough a discussion. He wondered what his chums at Oxford, especially Jack Reefer, would say, if they saw him there, talking theology with a young American woman who taught Sunday-school, and who had the courage of her convictions. He saw a look of disappointment on his companion's face, however, and he thought to himself, "I care more for her opinion than for that of the boys." So he continued:

"But I'll tell you. I believe in God and I respect the Bible. I think there is a great amount of truth in the Bible, and I hold its moral laws to be the standard of all morality. But when it comes to believing that everything in the Bible is

God's Word, and that all its doctrines are true, I must confess that I do not see my way clear to saying I am a believer in that sense. I hope you will not think me a rogue on this account, Miss Helen;" and there was much anxiety in his tone.

Helen smiled. There were both sweetness and sadness in her smile.

"No, indeed," she answered, more brightly and cheerfully even than he had dared to hope she would. He had been sorry that he could not tell her a different story of his faith. Another would have dissembled. But there was no trace of that kind of guile in Harry Chamberlain, that deceives and dissembles. He had not thought of it before, but just now it seemed to him that he would rather lose his right hand than the good opinion and friendship of this young woman by his side. But he could not deceive her, not even to gain that opinion. He was a close observer, and in the pleasant days at Liverpool and at London and at Paris he had been astonished at her perfect womanliness. He had said to his father:

"What a difference there is between Miss Helen and Miss Corine."

"In whose favor?" demanded the old man, smiling.

"Just as though you did not know, father."

“Well, well, perhaps I do. But, Harry boy, most people fail to see these subtle differences, they seem so insignificant and unimportant. But these slight differences in appearance and action are indications of great differences in character, and they go far to make happiness or unhappiness in this world—and in the world to come.” For the old gentleman had been quick to observe that Helen’s heart was deeply pious, and that Corine’s was not.

He had tried to talk to Corine about it one evening, but all the reward he received for his pains was, “Why, Mr. Chamberlain, you talk just like Helen does, and she and I do not agree on that subject at all.” Whereat Helen’s stock in the old man’s opinion immediately rose still higher, and Corine’s correspondingly fell.

When Helen assured Harry so warmly that she did not think him a “rogue,” he was more pleased than she for a minute imagined. She could notice that her answer pleased him. He was too transparent a fellow to hide his feelings successfully. But she did not know what a load she had lifted from his mind. He simply asked, “Why not?” Helen burst into so merry a laugh that he for a moment doubted whether she were taking the matter seriously. Her words, however, soon reassured him that she was.

“Why,” she explained, “there are several reasons. In the first place, because I am almost certain that you will not always cling to these false views. Corine thinks about as you do, but I know she has been drawing nearer the truth every day. I used to feel so bad, and almost despaired of ever seeing her change, but you cannot imagine what a change has already taken place in her. Her going to college now may bring on a relapse, but in the end she will embrace the truth, I know; and you will, too. In the next place, what would it help you or me or anybody else if I were to get angry and refuse to consider you as being worthy of my esteem, because you have confided to me that you have sincere doubts? I think that is exactly how some Christians help drive souls away from God. They can not listen even to an honest statement of another’s doubts, and expect everybody to look at things with fully enlightened eyes before they have helped him to get eyes that can see. Now, I am dreadfully intolerant of any false doctrine, but I am not intolerant of a man or of a woman who happens to be the victim of false doctrine. In the third place, the circumstance that you say you wish you could be a firm believer is sufficient proof that you will one day be one. For the Bible says, ‘Seek, and ye

shall find,' and it says, 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.' If I expect to meet you as a saved soul in heaven, how can I treat you as a rogue here?"

Harry was amazed. None of the young people of his acquaintance had ever talked so to him, none of them could talk so, none of them would talk so to him if they could, and here was this young girl talking to him as though she were his own mother.

"She is just like mother was, too," he thought. "Strange that I did not notice it before."

"Miss Doner," he cried, "where in the world did you learn to talk to a man in that fashion? I believe if you were our rector at Liverpool instead of that scholarly and renowned Doctor ——, I might be a solid pillar of the church to-day. As it is, I have another confession to make. I have not been in Doctor ——'s church in the last two years as often as I have gone to service since I have been here in Riverton. What do you think of that?"

"It is just what I expected," said she. "But I have been wanting to ask you what you think of our pastor's sermons. I have been afraid to ask before, because I suspected that you were a stray sheep of the flock."

"I can truthfully say that your pastor has made

a deep impression on me. Indeed, I am positive if I had not heard that sermon this morning we would not now be discussing these affairs."

"I am so glad," Helen said. And then they both lapsed into a silence that was not unpleasant.

What their thoughts were you will have to imagine. Nor did either of them speak until they were turning the corner into the lane that led from the road up to the old homestead. There Helen said, "I want you to promise me something."

"What is it?" asked he.

"That you will let our pastor talk to you about these things."

"I'd rather have you do my preaching, Miss Helen, and I assure you it will do me more good."

"No, it would not. The force of preaching lies in the Word of God itself, and not in the person who preaches it. Pastor Denton knows more about the Word and how to apply it than I do. I am only a very poor scholar of his at the best."

"Don't say that, Hele—, Miss Helen. You know you have been the only one who could make the Word touch my skeptical old heart as it has not been touched for years."

"Will you promise?" said she simply.

"If I must, yes."

She rewarded him with a smile that seemed like

a glimpse of lost paradise to him. Then they joined the others, who were already alighting.

They had no opportunity to renew their conversation that day, for they returned as part of the load in the big sled, Mr. Doner and Mr. Chamberlain driving home in the cutter.

CHAPTER XV.

GOOD-BYE.

IT was not later than seven when they returned to the Doner home in town, and the plans were that they would spend the evening in having a good, sociable time. While the others were in the sitting room getting off their wraps and warming their toes, Helen excused herself in order to go in and light the lamps in the parlor. Harry volunteered to help her, but she thanked him, saying that his father had promised to be her assistant.

After they left the room, Mr. Chamberlain slipped noiselessly up stairs, and soon appeared with the precious mistletoe. This they affixed to the chandelier in the front parlor before they had lighted the lamps, as it was still a secret between them and they wanted to guard the secret carefully. When the others came in later, none of them noticed it except Harry. Whether his eye was specially practiced in seeing the mistletoe, or whether he suspected that his father and Helen had some special plans when they withdrew to light the lamps, I do not know.

At any rate, they had not been in the room five minutes when Helen stepped up to turn down one of the wicks that was turned too high, and, ere she herself had time to think what was happening, both Harry and his father were hurrying toward her. The others were alarmed, thinking that the lamp must be exploding. Corine screamed and ran toward the door. Then two resounding kisses were heard. It was difficult to determine who held the honor of having reached Helen first; but Mr. Chamberlain resolutely insisted that that distinction belonged to him, and Harry, thereupon, gracefully yielded in favor of his father.

As for Helen, she had escaped into the hall where she was trying to wipe away her blushes. When she reappeared she was greeted with a peal of laughter. "To think that I was the first one to be caught in my own trap," she protested, still blushing. But just then attention was diverted from her, for Mr. Chamberlain and Harry again sprang forward, this time joined by Mr. Doner, and grandma was receiving a hearty salute under the mistletoe.

The evening, begun in this lively manner, was agreeably spent from beginning to end. There was only one thing to cast a shadow now and then into their hearts. That was the thought of the depart-

ure of Mr. Chamberlain and Harry. They were to leave in the evening of the next day.

Whenever Helen happened to think of that, she felt sad in spite of herself; she hardly knew why, and yet she had quite certain suspicions.

It was the same with Mr. Chamberlain. Although he and Harry intended to make an extensive tour of the western states, going through Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin, and so on west to the Pacific coast, yet he always associated his leaving Riverton with returning to his own home at Liverpool, and somehow this home had seemed drearier than ever since that summer's visit of the Doner party.

As for Harry, he frankly confessed to himself that he disliked to leave Riverton because Helen Doner lived in Riverton, and he wanted to be where she was.

Even the deacon was a little gloomy at times that evening. He always had a spell of the "blues" when visitors whom he liked left his house.

But the evening was a delightfully pleasant one in spite of this undercurrent of sadness that filled their hearts. When Corine left that evening, she said, "Oh, I wish every day were Christmas, and we could all spend all the Christmases right here

at Uncle Frank's." She did not say exactly what she was thinking, that she wished the common every-days at her home were something like those at her uncle's. She was thinking that, perhaps, if she had a home like Helen's she would be as content to stay at home from college as was Helen. Her father, and even her mother, were thinking similar thoughts and wishing similar wishes. Would their hopes ever be realized? Not until they would cease simply wishing and allow themselves to be induced to take those necessary steps without which no family has ever had a home that was a home in truth, steps leading toward Jesus Christ.

Harry was nothing if he was not a manly fellow. The next morning, without having any pretext, he called at Pastor Denton's. He was given a welcome that made him wonder how a man of books and sermons could still be so much a man of heart and soul, and in such evident touch with his fellow beings on earth. He stated his case at once, and in a straightforward manner.

"I have come to see you, sir, because I yesterday promised Miss Doner that I would. There was something in your discourse yesterday morning that put me into a mood that had not come over me for years. While I was in this mood, Miss

Doner and I drifted into a conversation that concerned the state of my own soul. She referred me to you, after she had made what I thought would surely in the end be a successful effort on her part at reclaiming my run-away soul. She says that you can do me more good, and, at the same time, more substantial good than she could ever dream of doing. And, sir, if you can, no one will be happier than your humble servant himself; for, to tell the whole truth, I have not found a jot of satisfaction in entertaining the doubts that have come into my heart, and yet I have not been able to drive them away."

"I like your frankness, young man," said the pastor. "Now, do you think that you can give me a history of these doubts that have been troubling you, and tell me to what extent they have had an effect on your faith and your life?"

Harry soon found himself talking to the pastor as he would have talked to his mother. It seemed to him while the pastor was talking to him as though God himself were speaking, gently and kindly, as a father would talk to a child which he dearly loved. When he left the parsonage, he was wondering how he could have been such a fool all these years, and when the train pulled out from the station that evening he made a clean breast of

the whole affair to his father, and his father said, "Well, well, Harry. God bless you, my boy;" and nobody could know better than Harry did how much his father meant.

When it was almost time for the 'bus to arrive that evening to take Harry and his father down to "make" the eleven o'clock train, Harry had a few words with Helen alone in the hall, where she had gone to fetch his hat and coat.

"Miss Helen," he said, and Helen thought he had never looked so handsome and manly, "I shall write to you after we are gone, and will you answer if I do?"

There was no time for thought, so she simply said, "Yes, if mamma and papa allow me."

Then there was the rattle of wheels outside, the sharp breath of the wind as the door was opened, hasty farewells, and Harry and his father were gone.

Two weeks later Corine went away; and if Helen had not been so busy with her home duties and her music lessons, she would undoubtedly have been extremely lonely. But her routine of daily duty was so pleasant, and she was so much interested in her pipe-organ lessons, that the "blues" could not last long. As for her and Corine and Harry, I am positive that you would have found Helen the happiest.

Truly, "godliness with contentment is great gain," for we find Helen happier at home with her plain household duties, than Corine with the excitement of college life and the gratification of a great ambition, and Harry with the whirl of travel. But then—as we have seen, Harry had special reasons for not being entirely satisfied.

CHAPTER XVI.

A SUMMER'S OUTING.

HELEN'S "blues" were abruptly terminated by a letter she received three days after the gentlemen had left Riverton. It was from Harry, of course; and a livelier, racier, more entertaining letter Helen had never had addressed to her. Her correspondence so far had been entirely with her school-girl acquaintances, so that Harry's letter was in the nature of an entire novelty to her.

He addressed her as his friend, and told her about the different cities they had visited. He seemed to see the humorous side of everything and had a peculiarly attractive way of expressing himself even about those things which were not in themselves interesting. He also spoke of her "sermon" to him, for so he persisted in calling it, and of the talk he had had with Pastor Denton.

Helen could see that the impression which had been made on his soul at Riverton was not by any means effaced. It had, if anything, been made deeper since he had left his teachers. She was

glad for this, as she had been fearing that perhaps after Harry was out in the world again he would forget the wholesome lessons which the pastor and she had been instrumental in teaching him.

Mr. and Mrs. Doner had told Helen that she might write to Harry. She had asked her mother whether she wished to read her letters; but her mother had said that she trusted her enough not to require that. When her mother said that, she knew that her trust in Helen would not be misplaced, and knew, likewise, that confidence begets confidence, and that a child will be much less likely to deceive its parents when it is trusted, than when it notices that its every movement is watched as if it were a criminal. So Helen and Harry wrote to each other regularly, and life seemed happier for both of them.

Harry's father was delighted. These old years of his life were being filled with warm sunshine, instead of the chilly shadows he had seen approaching only a few months before. Harry often would hand his letters from Helen over to his father when he had perused them himself, and the old man grew almost as anxious for their arrival as was Harry himself.

Corine also corresponded regularly with Helen. Helen observed that her cousin was becoming more

and more confirmed in her strange views. It seemed as if the influence of her college associations were entirely effacing the good impressions that had gradually been made upon her. Helen said nothing to her in her letters, however, for she had learned to feel confident that it would turn out aright in the end even with Corine.

The first letter that Helen received from Harry after he had returned to England led her into a long train of musing. She read it and reread it, and read it again. It was in the following June, and she had been swinging idly in the hammock that summer's afternoon. To tell the truth, she had been thinking of Harry as she idled there, wondering whether he had yet reached his home, and whether his letters would be as regular after he found himself once more among his old friends, as they had been while he was traveling about. The post was brought to her by the neighbor's boy, whom she had hailed as he went down the street a few minutes before, and Helen at once opened her one letter with eager hands. After the three perusals, she laid the pages in her lap and drifted away off, beyond the woods in the distance, beyond the clouds far away in the bright blue sky, into the future.

She must have seen some very pretty things

away off there beyond the fleecy clouds, for she smiled and looked serenely happy, and fell into a light sleep that seemed to carry her still farther away into still pleasanter scenes. She awakened as gradually as she had fallen asleep, and was just beginning to wonder where she might be, when a voice close by called out:

“Hello there, Nellie, why don’t you jump up and embrace me?”

She did jump up at that, and, moreover, she did embrace the speaker, for there stood Corine.

“Why, you naughty girl,” she cried, kissing her and devouring her with her eyes. “When in the world did you come? And why didn’t you tell me about it? I thought you were going to spend a week in the mountains before you came home.”

“‘The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men gang aft agley,’” quoted Corine, “and it seems the schemes o’ women gang likewise. I think there ought to be an exception in their favor, for they have so many other disadvantages. But say, Helen, what makes you look so awfully happy? Is it that letter you have just dropped by jumping up so unceremoniously?”

“Well, didn’t you tell me to jump up?” returned Helen, as she hastily gathered up the pre-

cious pages and tried to look unconscious. "Why didn't you go to the mountains? Here, take the hammock, while I run in and bring a chair from the porch."

"O dear no, don't do that. I haven't been home yet, just ran in while mamma was speaking to Mrs. Baird about some society business. I'll tell you about my change of plans some other time. What I want to know now is about the letter that makes you look as if you had been in the seventh heaven. It's from Harry, of course; that goes without saying. But what has he written?"

"I think you are mistaken about my looks, Corine, and about the letter's having any effect on them. But I will tell you what he writes, since you have guessed who did the writing."

"Guessed?" laughed Corine. "Why, Nellie, I didn't guess; I simply said something that was as plainly to be seen as the trees or the flower-bed over there."

"Corine Hereford, I think you're just horrid, and I will not tell you now what he has written, so there."

"O yes you will, Nellie; you know you can't be so ugly as that when I've only just come back."

"Well, if you really want to know, it is this. Harry is coming to America to stay, next fall. It

seems his trip last winter was as much of a prospecting tour as anything else, and he was looking about for a good location for some kind of a manufacturing concern that he intends to establish. He writes that, unless he and his father are both much mistaken, there is a splendid opening at X., and they will begin operations there next fall for certain."

"Aha, that's it, eh? How perfectly lovely that will be. X. is just about ninety miles from Riverton, isn't it? You can get there by rail and by water. Nellie, Harry is certainly a truthful boy. He was prospecting, no doubt, but he finished before he left Riverton. There he found a treasure that can't be equaled in England; and, unless he and his father are both very much mistaken, X. will be a splendid place to settle down and proceed with the final operations of getting possession of that treasure."

"Corine," Helen was blushing furiously, "it's perfectly horrid of you to say such things. You know that Harry's letter means no such thing."

"Well, perhaps his letter doesn't; but mark my word, *he* does; so where's the difference? I see the results as plainly as I ever care to see anything. Nellie, inside of three years from now you will be Mrs. Harry Chamberlain, and there is no use in your denying it."

"Well," said Helen, suddenly changing her ground, "if I am, nobody will be prouder of anything than I will be of that."

"That's right; you may as well confess it to me, Nellie. Now, before it's too late I want to give you some advice. Of course, I congratulate you, and all that. But I think this will be a very foolish thing for you to do. This thing of devoting the very best years of our lives to a husband and a family, I don't believe in. I think that's where most women throw away their chances. The first fine man that comes along and condescends to ask them for their hand in marriage they accept, and so the men go on, getting more independent every day, and we poor women are regarded as inferior creatures, who—"

"Corine, you know there's no use in talking that way to me. Let's talk about something else now."

"All right. If you will not listen, I suppose you will not, but I regarded it as my duty to tell you. There's mamma, waving to me frantically. I'll have to go. Come over to-night, Nellie."

"All right, I will."

Mr. Doner was just coming home for the evening. Helen joined him, and they went in to supper. That evening as they were returning from the Herefords', she told her parents of Harry's plans.

"Yes," said her father, "Mr. Chamberlain wrote me some weeks ago in regard to the plan, and I heartily endorsed it. With Harry at the head of an establishment of that kind, success is almost a foregone conclusion."

Harry came toward the end of September. He stayed only a day and a half at Riverton, as he was in a hurry to reach X. and close up the transaction for the lease of the property, and then go to Chicago to place his orders for the necessary machinery. He had projected a trip to the lumber regions of northern Michigan after that, and he expected that things would be far enough along by the time he returned to X. to enable him to begin certain alterations in the factory he had leased, the tenant who was then holding it being expected to vacate about the end of November.

"I'll be back, though, by Christmas," said he, in as cheery a voice as he could assume, "and nothing could please me more than if we could have a Christmas just like last year's. You can tell the rector that I'd like to hear that same sermon again," and off he hurried to the station.

Corine was at college again, distinguishing herself as a senior, and did not meet Harry on that visit. Christmas brought them both to Riverton, however, and Corine began to be a little less

certain about the soundness of the advice she had given Helen, for Harry had not lost a bit of that genuine gentlemanliness that so distinguished him. She actually began to envy Helen somewhat, for she still insisted that Harry and Helen were destined to be man and wife at a not very distant day, although no cards had yet appeared announcing a fact of so great importance.

The holidays were spent just as happily as those of the preceding winter, perhaps a trifle more so, for we enjoy these things more intelligently, and for that reason more thoroughly, as we grow older.

The absence of Mr. Chamberlain was felt by them all, although he was well represented by means of a large package, containing gifts for each one, and a letter for them all together, wishing them a happy Christian Christmas, and assuring them that in spirit he was with them, and that he could imagine just what they were all doing.

Harry remained until the day after New Year's, and then reluctantly returned to X., where he threw himself into his new field of work with a vim and a wisdom that soon put the venture beyond the stages of a mere experiment, and assured him of a permanent source of occupation and independent income.

He was a tremendous worker himself, and ex-

pected his employés to work. He personally superintended as much of the establishment as he possibly could, even to the engaging and disciplining of the commonest employés, treating them with so much knowledge of human nature and so much consideration of human weakness that he never had a complaint from their quarter.

Mr. Doner ran up to X. in March, and returned with much gratification at his young friend's success. Mr. Chamberlain had asked him to have an eye on the boy, and he was glad to be of service to his old friend in any way.

"That boy will make his mark," said the deacon on the evening of his return to Riverton, "and it will not take him a hundred years to do it, either. He has selected a very fine town as a location, too. I had no idea that it was as good a town as it seems to be. It must be a very pleasant place in the summer. If everything goes all right I shall go up again in July. I have half a mind to take some of you along; I know nothing would please Harry more, and, as his father will be here then, we can make a pleasant outing of it."

"Wouldn't that be delightful?" said Helen. "But it's queer to hear papa making plans so long ahead."

"Well, I am surely carried away with that

town, and would like to spend a few weeks there myself. You see, I am getting older, Helen, and begin to appreciate holidays more. Ever since that delightful summer in England, I have been thinking of a possible repetition of its pleasures, and it struck me that the same people getting together on this side of the water might succeed in having a good time again. Harry will not be busy then. It is their slack season ; they generally close that kind of factories for repairs and inventory."

"Well, I hope you will still be in the notion when July comes, papa," said Helen, as she kissed him "good night."

In June Helen attended the commencement at the college where Corine was to be graduated. Corine had finished the course with a splendid record for scholarship, and stood head and shoulders above all the others in her class. Her triumph was a signal one, and Helen could not help thinking how much more of an affair graduating at —— College was than graduating at Riverton High School. Still, after Corine had finished her brilliant address and the applause had died away, she could not convince herself that she wished she were in Corine's place, for it seemed to her that her dear cousin was drifting farther and

farther away from what she considered the ideal of womanhood. It was beginning to show in Corine's manner, too. There was a sort of freedom and boldness about it that was sometimes almost repulsive to Helen. In conversation Corine would advance ideas so startling, that sometimes Helen could hardly recognize the cousin who, only a few years before, had been her schoolmate and constant companion.

When they returned to Riverton they found their parents actively planning the summer outing at X. Both girls at once threw themselves with heart and soul into the project, and soon everything else was forgotten in the excitement of wardrobes and packing, and time-tables and hotels.

On the second of July they set out, the party comprising Mr. and Mrs. Doner, Helen and Erwin, and the Herefords. There was not much grain coming in at the elevator at this time, so the business could easily be left in charge of the other partners.

They reached X. on the evening of the same day, having made the trip partly by rail and partly by water. Harry met them at the dock and saw them lodged at the R—— house, then hurried off to meet his father, who was expected to arrive on the late train from the east.

Then followed days of pure pleasure; driving, rowing, fishing, excursions up the river to the summer hotels, moonlight rides on the river-boats, all these went together to make a delightful time. They had met John Perkins a few days after their arrival, and had persuaded him to extend his stay, and he accompanied them in the most of their excursions.

One evening as they were returning from a trip up to one of the club-houses, Harry proposed that they try a sail on the following day.

"Several of us down at the factory have bought a small yacht together—some of the office fellows, and one of the men in the shop, and myself. None of us has ever sailed much except this man, but I'll get him to go with us. We'll not venture out into the lake, only across to the island; and I am sure you will all enjoy sailing."

"Isn't there any danger?" asked Corine.

"Well, yes, I suppose there is," he answered, "but not enough to keep many people off the water. Haven't you noticed how white the river is with sails some afternoons when the breeze is favorable?"

"Yes, I have. Just think how many were out on the Fourth. But I have wondered that people risk their lives on the water in those little boats with such large sails. Why, sometimes they lean

over so, that a person is positive that they will capsize. And I am sure that I have read of a great many accidents on this very river."

"Undoubtedly. But in all these cases, at least in the majority of them, you will find that the yachts which capsized had kegs on board, and that the kegs were empty and the men who were pitched overboard contained the contents of the kegs. In other cases it is that the sailors were inexperienced. I would not think of taking you out alone, but this Dawson is an experienced sailor, and above all else he is extremely careful—almost too careful, in fact, if such a thing could be. But if any of you have any hesitation about going, we will not attempt the trip."

This proposition, however, did not meet with the approval of the young folks, who had all become interested. Erwin objected on the ground that he had an engagement with some boys he had met at the hotel. But Harry promised to take him sailing another day, so it was arranged that they would try the yacht on the following morning.

It was quite early when they gathered at the dock up the river on the next day, but they found that Dawson had everything in readiness for them. He was fastening down a few ropes, and they had occasion to notice how precisely and carefully he

did everything. He was a strong, "tallish" man, his face browned with the heat and the sun, his hands hard and calloused with toil. He seemed just the man to handle a yacht carefully and firmly. Still, his appearance did not exactly inspire confidence, for his excessive caution and carefulness had given him a sort of anxious look that gave one the impression that his care arose from timidity.

A fine brisk breeze was blowing aslant the river. Where they were standing, sheltered somewhat by a high bluff that rose from the bank, the wind was only strong enough to start the yacht acceptably, but out beyond the white-caps were rolling merrily along, and there was promise of some fine sport.

The parents had not joined the sailing party, saying that they preferred to take the ferry-boat and meet the young people on the island. The young people had no objections to this arrangement. They were only eager for the novel sport.

Off they started now, Harry watching the jib-ropes, Dawson handling the tiller and the main-sail. They moved somewhat slowly out from the shore, their course lying slightly up the river, so as to catch the wind to best advantage. John and the girls, who had never sailed before, "took" to the easy motion at once, and exclaimed that they were in no haste to reach the island, asking whether they could not sail up into the lake a piece.

"I should think we could," said Harry, as he looked to Dawson. But Dawson was so carefully scanning his main-sail and so closely watching the course of the boat that he gave no answer.

Just then the boat began to quicken her pace and at the same time to lean over considerably to one side. The girls promptly grew nervous. But Harry only laughed at them.

"Why, this is just the sport of yachting," cried he. "See how that boat yonder is leaning. It's exciting, you know." And he laughed aloud at John, who was holding with a desperate clutch on the gunwale.

But then he himself suddenly caught hold of the mast. If he had not, he would have been thrown headlong into the water.

"What's the matter, Dawson?" he shouted.

Before Dawson could reply, the boat was again carried over on its beam. Corine was thrown violently into the bottom of the yacht.

Dawson was standing up now, tugging with all his might at the sheet, and pressing the tiller with his knee.

"Wind's pretty strong out here," he shouted back. "We ought to have taken a reef when we started, but we're in for it now."

John had pulled Corine up on the seat again as

well as he could. The two girls sat there, their faces white, their hands holding each other close. John stood helpless by, not knowing what to do.

"Watch your ropes, Mr. Chamberlain," they could hear Dawson shouting. "We'll have to come about if we can."

Through the dashing spray they could see Harry, steady as a clock, uncleating the ropes.

The next moment the girls were both on the floor. A mass of water was tumbling in on them. John narrowly escaped rolling overboard.

The boat righted momentarily, and he regained his balance. He took Helen up hastily and set her down quickly. Without looking to see whether she could retain her seat, he bent over Corine.

"Give me your hand, Corine," he called.

Corine lay there as if lifeless. She made no response when he took her hand and called to her again.

"O God, she's dead!" he groaned, as he noticed how white her face was, and that her features were firmly set. A gash in her forehead was bleeding. She had been lying with her face in the water, that now stood inches deep in the boat.

He raised her lifeless form in his arms and was trying to think where to lay her down, when he was struck a stunning blow on the head, and fell

forward. The sound of rushing water gurgled in his ears. There was a splash, and he fell, as it seemed to his excited mind, into the arms of some great monster of the deep. He struggled to raise Corine, shouting with all his might.

Helen had not noticed what John did after he so roughly threw her on the seat. From some strange motive, she did not stop to wonder what it was, she moved forward as well as the ever unsteadier position of the boat would allow, over the cross-seat to the bow, where Harry was.

"Can I do anything to help, Harry?" she called.

"Yes, Helen, you can pray God for us," and even then he wondered at her courage. "I have been trying to pray, but the Lord will hear you rather than me. And wait, Helen," as the boat again lurched over, "do you think you can hold these ropes and let them out if Dawson calls to do so? I want to try to get down that main-sail. If I know anything about it, that's our only chance now. I don't know why Dawson doesn't bring the boat about. I half surmise he's afraid to try it. Can you hold these, do you think?"

"Yes, I can," she said.

"And Helen, if any thing happens, I want you to know that I loved you."

He stooped and kissed her as he pressed the

ropes into her hand, and then sprang out on the little forward deck and began to tug at the halliards.

It was like attempting a hopeless task.

He knew that they were getting out where the wind was stronger, and it was evident that Dawson was at his wits' end.

Harry looked at the ropes that had been cleated down with Dawson's utmost care, and a shudder of despair ran over him. They were fastened down so thoroughly that he saw only a mass of loops and twists. Besides, the rope was wet with spray, and seemed stiff and rigid as if cast in iron.

Then Harry prayed—a great strong sob of his soul, knowing that if help were to come it must come from above.

Then one turn of the rope yielded, he saw in a glance how it was wrapped, and in an instant the great sail came rushing down. He knew that the gaff would strike John's head, but he was concerned to keep the sail from being carried against Helen by the wind, which had now grown fearfully strong.

"Let the ropes fly now, Helen," he called, "and stoop down into the boat so that the sail will not carry you overboard."

She did so, and in a moment the yacht was

righted, the sail lying in a promiscuous mass in the boat, with John floundering and shouting beneath it, and the jib-ropes angrily switching the water.

"Well, we're all safe now," cried Harry cheerfully, "and John and Corine are covered up snugly in the bargain. But I tell you, it was a close call. Are you hurt any, Miss Helen?"

"No, only frightened. But look at Corine."

John had emerged from beneath the sail, still bearing his lifeless burden.

"Let me see," said Harry, feeling her pulse. "Poor girl, she has fainted. Lay her down here with her head in Miss Helen's lap, John. And can you dip a little water in your hat?"

"My hat's gone," said John.

"Here, take mine then."

John hurriedly dipped the water, and they began to bathe Corine's face.

Presently she opened her eyes.

"Are all the rest drowned too?" she asked.

"No, and you aren't either," and Helen laughed as she looked down into her face.

Corine jumped to her feet.

"Oh, are you sure we are all safe now?" she demanded, trembling from head to foot.

"Yes sir; safe, and wet too," said John's hearty voice.

Corine seemed relieved at hearing him.

"I thought perhaps some of you had been washed overboard. I seem to be sort of dazed, and hadn't seen anybody but Helen and Mr. Chamberlain and Dawson."

"Well, there isn't anybody else but John," said Helen mischievously. "The folks didn't come with us, you know."

The color returned to Corine's cheeks at that.

"Yes, yes, I know. But I feel better now. Can't we go back to land and get some dry shoes to put on?"

"I think we had better go over to the island," said Harry. "The folks will be alarmed about us if we do not turn up soon, and you will have a better chance of getting some dry things to put on over there at the hotel than up here on the river bank. We can sail over with the jib, eh, Dawson?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, let us get things into a little better shape here. The boat looks more like a wreck than it does like anything else."

"It came near enough to being a wreck," said Dawson. "If we hadn't had a boat that runs out of the wind, we would all be at the bottom of the river this moment, and it's no less than twenty foot deep here, neither."

"What I say is this," responded Harry. "If we hadn't had a merciful Father in heaven, and a woman on board that knows how to talk to that Father, I wouldn't give a penny for our chances in a wind-squall like this with all our sail set, boat running out of the wind or not."

Nothing more was said, and in silence the men furled up the sail and set the jib. The wind was amply strong to carry them rapidly to the island.

They were a rather crestfallen and bedraggled lot of sailors as they walked up the wide path to the hotel piazza in search of their parents. They frankly explained to these in what a perilous position they had been.

Corine was immediately taken in charge by her anxious mother, but soon reappeared. The cut in her forehead was only slight, it having been caused by her striking the center-board box as she fell. She arranged her hair so as to cover it, and seemed none the worse for her experience except that her dress was not so fresh and clean as it might have been. But, as Helen's was almost as bad, she was readily consoled, and the remainder of the day passed pleasantly enough, the parents hardly realizing in what fearful peril their children had been, and the young folks being to all appearances their own natural selves again after their fright.

A close observer might have noticed a difference in them all, however. Helen was as blithe as a bird, gayer and more cheerful even than ever. People sometimes are so when they have something they wish to hide. Harry was restless and nervous. John and Corine were both strangely silent. And of the young folks all but Helen were glad as the day drew to its close and they returned to the city.

Old Mr. Chamberlain did not get over his concern so soon as the others did, but that was quite natural. He referred to the adventure again and again.

"It was a risky thing for you to do, boy," he said, "to go out when the water was as rough and dangerous as it must have been. Don't do it again."

"I should think I will not, father. But I trusted implicitly in Dawson's experience and ability. He isn't the sailor he pretends to be."

"Why, no sir," added Helen quickly. "Mr. Dawson did not seem to know what to do when we got out there where the wind from off the bluff caught us; and, if it hadn't been that Mr. Harry kept cool and steady, we would all have been thrown overboard."

"Well, well, don't let it happen again," said

the old man; but he looked kindly at Helen and proudly at Harry, and was glad to hear that his boy had saved them from probable death.

When they had returned to their hotel lodgings that evening, and Harry had retired with his father, he said; "Father, I have something I want to tell you, if you will hear it yet to-night."

"Well, well ; what is it, Harry ?"

"Why, it's like this. This morning out there in the storm when I jumped up on the deck to try to get down the sail, I thought sure we were all in for certain death. I leaned over and told Helen Doner that I loved her, and I kissed her as I told her so. You may think I was rash and hasty, and under other circumstances I surely would have been if I had acted like that toward her. But, as I say, I was certain that we'd never get out of that gale alive; and so I did it, and it's done, and I must say I'm not half sorry it is, for I would have done it, with your permission, sooner or later at any rate. I know I love her truly, and I know she is worthy of the truest love of a much better man than I am. So I've been thinking that, if you have no objections, I'll speak to Mr. Doner to-morrow and ask him whether he will give his consent to my speaking more definitely with Helen. What do you say, father?"

The old gentleman had turned away, and pretended to be busy arranging his pillow.

"Well, Harry, well," he finally said. "Don't you think it would be more appropriate if I would speak to him for you?"

"No, father, not in this country. People don't do that here. And I'm sure I agree with them. I'll feel much more manly if I go and speak to Mr. Doner myself, than if I skulk around here like a coward while you are with him pleading my cause."

"I suppose you're right, Harry, so go on, and God bless you. I wonder what he will say to you. He is a very fine man, is Mr. Doner; I've had many a dealing with him, and have learned to esteem and to respect him highly. But these American cousins of ours are no end fond and proud of their daughters. I wonder what he will say, boy."

"What is bothering me more is what she will say," answered Harry.

"Do you mean to say that if her father consents she may reverse the decision?" asked his father in surprise.

"Why, certainly, father. The battle's only half over, and the easy half at that, when I've seen her father. I am sure I do not want her to accept me just because he is willing; would you?"

"No, I suppose not, Harry boy ; but if you have any trouble in getting her consent tell me, and I'll speak to her for you myself. For she's a precious girl, Harry, a precious girl."

"I'm glad you think so, father."

"When is this all to be done, Harry?"

"Oh, I intend to speak to Mr. Doner to-morrow morning before you and he start on that fishing trip, and if I can muster up the necessary courage I'll speak to Helen in the afternoon when we go out to the old fort. You know we young ones had arranged to go out there in the afternoon."

"All right, Harry. Good night, and God bless you, boy. Come here."

Harry came, and, before he was aware of what his father wanted, the old man had grasped his hand and was almost crushing it. "God bless you, boy. It's what I've been praying for a whole year."

Next morning while Helen and Corine were down stairs at a late breakfast, Harry tapped at the door of Mr. and Mrs. Doner's room, and was bidden enter. He found them both within, and, with his customary frankness, yet with considerable hesitation and bashfulness, he told them substantially what he had told his father the evening before. The story did not seem to be a new one

to Mrs. Doner, but the deacon was much surprised. Substantially what they told him during the half hour he was with them can best be judged from his happy expression as he emerged from the room.

In the afternoon Corine pleaded headache, and would not venture out on the long drive to the fort. So Helen and Harry set out alone. What Harry said on that drive I do not know. Neither do I know what Helen answered. Neither do I know how she looked when she returned, for she had her veil drawn over her eyes, and was heard to say, "This river air is so trying on one's complexion."

But I do know that when she went up stairs and found her mother alone in her room, two women spent an hour in that room crying softly to themselves and saying a few incoherent words occasionally.

And I know that it took Harry an unprecedentedly long time to return the horse and phaeton to the stable, and when he came back to the hotel he went directly to the Doners' room, and that evening when Helen appeared at the table it was noticed that she wore on her finger a circlet of gold that had never been seen there before.

Corine sat next to Helen. As soon as oppor-

tunity offered she leaned over and said, "Didn't I tell you, Nellie?"

"Hush," said Helen, and Corine laughed mischievously.

But her laughter soon died away, and she grew very grave, and it was not long before she excused herself, saying that she did not feel well yet. And when she went up stairs, it was with her kerchief held to her eyes.

One week more, and the Riverton party returned from their summer's outing.

Harry went at his work with new energy and a new purpose. His father had decided to stay in America that fall and winter, and to divide his time between X. and Riverton.

"It will seem entirely like home at Helen's now," he explained.

"We will certainly try to make it seem so to you," said Helen sweetly; which pleased the old man immensely.

In August the Brenners came, having postponed their visit on account of an attack of sickness that had befallen one of the boys on his return from India. During their stay Harry was at Riverton often, and they all thought more and more of him every day. He was grandma's especial favorite, and it was she who claimed the honor of having

persuaded him to join St. Luke's as a member, after having explained to him the difference between the confession of his church and that of her own, and shown him the Scripture proof of her faith.

"He was not very hard to persuade, though," grandma would acknowledge, as she stood by his side and patted his arm.

"I don't think anybody would be, after hearing a few of the sermons I have heard at St. Luke's, and near St. Luke's," he answered, glancing at Helen.

* There was no English Lutheran church at X., so Harry's name was entered at St. Luke's as that of a non-resident member.

CHAPTER XVII.

“WHAT GOD HATH JOINED.”

THEY had all been at the fishing grounds up the river one day, and now they were sitting on the veranda at the Doners', resting and talking over the events of the trip.

“Let's take a little walk, Nellie,” proposed Corine. “We have been sitting around all day, and I feel all cramped up. I didn't have half room enough in the surrey coming home.”

“All right,” assented Helen.

“All right,” chimed in Harry and Erwin.

“No sir,” declared Corine. “We want to be alone.”

“Good!” said the boys, and they resumed their seats on the steps.

“I have something so funny to tell you, Nellie dear,” continued Corine, when they had reached the shadow of the nearest trees.

“Well, what is it?”

“I hardly know where to begin, Nellie. It all seems so funny.”

"Why don't you just blurt it out, as you do everything else you have to say to me?"

"Because this is a little different from the general run of my affairs, you see."

"Oh, is it a real, true, genuine love affair this time, or is it only one of those wonderful theories again, that are to revolutionize the whole economy of the social system, ameliorate the condition of earth's millions of toilers, institute a true altruism, and go thundering down the ages as a startling witness of what one woman can do? Did I have it correct that time, Corine? I've heard you say it so often that I ought to know it by heart."

"Now, if you're only going to make fun of me, I'll go back to the porch and get Erwin to take this walk with me."

"No, don't. I'll promise to be good now, Corine, but don't be so unconscionably slow in coming to the point this time. Harry wants us to go down town with him after a while, and eat some ice cream."

"Well, let me sit in the hammock, and you sit on that bench, and I'll tell you all about it."

Helen did as she was commanded, and Corine lost herself in a train of wandering thought.

"When is it coming?" Helen at length ventured to ask.

"Oh, you impatient and inartistic thing," retorted Corine. "I wanted to fix it all up in style and tell it to you with a grand flourish ; but if you are bound to drive all the poetry and romance out of it, here you are : John Perkins proposed to me to-day out at the fishing ground."

"And you laughed at him."

"No indeed, I did not. When a good, earnest Christian man like John Perkins proposes to a woman in as sensible and manly a way as he did to me, there is no talk about laughing."

"Well, what did you do? Don't you see I am dying to know?"

"Well, Nellie, what could I do? I refused him."

"Why?"

"You know as well as I do."

"Did he take your answer without any protest?"

"Only asked me whether it would be of any use to expect a different answer later."

"What did you say then?"

"I said it would be of no use whatever."

"Look here, Corine Hereford," said Helen almost severely, "don't you love John any longer?"

"More than I ever did before."

"Then I want to tell you that you are the most foolish girl on the face of the whole earth, and you

ought to have a severe punishment for making yourself and John miserable when you both might be happy."

"How could we be happy, I wonder."

"By being sensible and getting married, of course."

"But what about my education and my prospects as a lawyer, and my plans as an agitator and emancipator of the sufferers among my fellow-beings on this poor old earth?"

"Fiddlesticks! I know that you are making two people, and who knows how many more as a consequence, unhappy, and I am in extreme doubt as to your ability ever to benefit that many with your absurd theories. If this is what it is coming to, I am more thankful than ever that I did not get to go to college with you."

"You don't understand these things, Nellie. You don't give them fair consideration."

"Well, maybe you'll know better some day. I'm sorry you told me about it. No, I'm not, either. Come, let's go to the house."

"You'll feel better about it in the morning, Nellie."

But Helen was provoked and would say nothing more; so they went to the house, and Corine soon took her departure.

Helen did not think different about it in the morning. On the contrary, the more she thought it over the more perplexed she became on the question of how Corine could care for John and know him to be a fine young man in every respect, and still refuse him on the ground that there were higher things for a woman to strive after than a happy married life.

When John called that evening to say farewell to the Brenners, who intended to leave on the following morning, she could not fail to notice the dejection which had taken possession of him. She saw that he tried with all his power to act his old self, but that made her pity him all the more. Once she was on the point of speaking to him about it, and she would have done so, had he given her the least opportunity. But he did not, so she said nothing. She thought that John ought to confide in her and come to her for consolation. She was sure he needed it sadly. Alas! How much lighter his burden might have become if he had only allowed her to share it with him.

But so it always is. That beautiful injunction, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ,” is complied with so seldom for this very reason. Those of us who would fain comply are timid about approaching the bearer in regard

to his burden, and we who are struggling with the burdens are timid about approaching the strong in regard to their help. And so we toil on, some of us fainting by the wayside, and others falling exhausted at the goal, when we might all be journeying cheerfully onward, and not one burdened beyond his strength.

Then again Helen thought, "What can I say if John does mention the subject to me?" She would not dare to bid him hope that Corine would repent of her words; for, although she thought that it must eventually end in that way, still, somehow, Corine was a different girl now from the cousin who used to be so well understood by Helen, and on whose subsequent position on almost any disputed question she had formerly been able to form so correct an opinion.

She did detest, above all other things, the habit of trying to comfort people with assurances that all will be well, when one has no reason to suppose such assurances to be founded. She considered that to be equivalent to telling falsehoods. "It may be that it will turn out so, but as long as I have no reason for supposing that it will except my own wish, I have no right to tell people to rest assured that it will." Thus this young philosopher would reason with herself.

Still, she did want John to say something. Even if she could not promise him anything definite for her erratic cousin, she could assure him of her own interest and sympathy and co-operation. Her sympathy would have been of the right kind, too. She was naturally of a sympathetic disposition, and her new happiness served to make her only more interested in the sorrows and disappointments of others. With one of the most important events in life approaching, she did not for a moment grow selfish, or inconsiderate, or forgetful of the troubles of others. But John remained silent, and her rich fund of good will and sympathy benefited him nothing.

The wedding had been set for the coming Christmas. It seemed rather soon to Mrs. Doner and Helen. They had done their best in arguing for the following June. But Harry and his father both were so urgent that they could not be dissuaded. Mr. Chamberlain's affairs positively demanded that he return to England not later than February, and it would be almost impossible for him to return again in June. Harry persisted that he needed Helen more than her folks at home did, and pointed them to his cheerless hotel life.

“Besides,” said he, “we are both old enough, and we have been acquainted with each other a long enough time—over two years now.”

"What an age that is," sighed Helen solemnly.

"Well, two and a half years is a long time to wait," said he.

"Who's been waiting that long, I wonder," said Helen.

"I have," quoth he.

"Oh, just listen!" retorted she. "Why Harry, we have been engaged only two months, and by Christmas it will be only five."

"Yes, but haven't I been waiting for you ever since two years ago last July? Didn't I love you as soon as I laid eyes on you? And didn't you tell me the other day—" But Helen had laid her dimpled hand on his mouth.

"Now, Mr. Harry Chamberlain, if you talk any more such nonsense right here before all the rest of the folks, there will not be any marriage at all; so there." And Harry was discreetly silent.

But the argument was not yet ended, nor did there seem to be any prospect of a settlement. Mrs. Doner could not think of hastening Helen's departure from home, and Helen would not look at it as Harry did. On the other hand, neither he nor his father showed any signs of weakening, and, where Helen and her mother had the advantage of being women in an argument, Harry and his father had the advantage of sound logic on their side.

As for Mr. Doner, he wisely refrained from taking either side in the controversy. When Mrs. Doner was arguing how lonely she would be without Helen, his eyes would fill with tears, and he would wonder how he would endure it without that sweet presence in the house. When Harry would be depicting his cheerless life in the great city, he could not help thinking of the temptations that come to young men in cities, simply because they have no home, and no one to cheer and to counsel them. So he said nothing either pro or con.

Neither did grandma say one word.

One evening as they sat on the veranda discussing the question in all its bearings once more, Helen playfully said:

"Well, I wonder what you think about it all, grandma. There is no use in asking papa. Who is right, grandma, these hasty men or we hesitating women?"

"Do you really care for my opinion?" asked the old lady.

"Yes indeed, grandma, I do."

"Yes, yes, mother," added Mrs. Doner. She was sure that grandma would agree with Helen and her, and, knowing that Harry thought so much of her, she thought this might be an unforeseen way to a speedy decision in her favor. To tell the truth,

she wished some one else had the decision to make. She almost wished it could be taken from her by force. She simply could not persuade her heart to say "Yes," and still she was far too intelligent not to see the force of Harry's reasoning. So she welcomed Helen's appeal to grandma. "Yes indeed, mother," she added, as she noticed that the old lady was hesitating to give her opinion, "we would prize your advice very highly."

"Well," said grandma slowly, "if I must say, I think Harry is perfectly right. I believe you feel it too, Emma. So why not let him have his way? It is only a short six months before the time you and Helen prefer, at any rate. As much as I dislike to see our Helen leave, my better judgment tells me it will be best so. And I say again, I think Harry has the best of the argument."

Mrs. Doner did not know what to say. She leaned her head on her hand a long while; then she arose quietly, walked over to Harry, kissed him, and said: "Well, Harry, as far as I am concerned it shall be at Christmas."

And now they all looked at Helen. What would she do?

"Why," said she, "you all look at me as if I had something to say. It isn't usual to ask the victim at what time it wishes to be sacrificed, is it?"

But her happy expression belied these mournful words. It was evident that she was glad the vexed question was settled.

“I’m glad you look so happy about it, miss,” answered Harry.

“Never you mind, mister,” was her retort. “Just wait till I leave you about two weeks after Christmas and come home to stay a few months with my mamma. You’ll wish then you hadn’t been so persistent.”

“I’m not afraid,” he replied; and forthwith began an animated conversation on the details of the important event.

The days and weeks that followed were as happy as they were busy.

It is true, once in a while Helen’s mother would stop while occupied with some work, and wander off into a reverie; and more than once sleep would not come when she laid her head down to rest at night, and often her pillow was wet with tears.

It is true that the deacon had some unusually thoughtful moods, and at times the clerks at the office had to speak to him twice where once should have sufficed.

It is true that Erwin and the other children had some very serious talks about “When Helen goes away.”

It is true that grandma made herself busier than ever, for fear melancholy reflections would come.

It is true that Helen took a number of long walks all alone by herself.

But with all that the days were full of happiness, and how swiftly they did fly ! It seemed no time at all, and the first of December was already with them. What with Christmas preparations and the wedding both at hand, the household was more alive than ever before in its history. But the great day had now arrived, and everything was in readiness.

It was to be a home wedding. Not many guests had been asked. The aunts and uncles were all invited, but only Corine of the cousins ; the pastor's family, the class of '81, R. H. S. : that was all.

The marriage had been appointed at twelve o'clock, high noon. The deacon had sent a carriage to the church to bring the pastor and his family to the house immediately after the close of service.

"We want things to move promptly," he said. "This thing of having delays and hitches in a programme of this sort I cannot bear." It was evident that the good deacon was a bit nervous.

The pastor reached the house in early enough

season to satisfy anybody, so Deacon Doner was at rest on that score.

“Is everything else arranged?” he had asked Erwin a dozen times.

“Yes sir, everything is in ship-shape,” answered he proudly. He was acting as superintendent of the arrangements, and prided himself not a little on the honor.

The piano had been hidden in a bower of smilax in the back parlor. The wedding procession was to enter the front parlor from the hall. The ceremony was to be performed in the center of that room under the chandelier, which had been gracefully draped with English mistletoe that Mr. Chamberlain had commissioned George Brenner to send over. Both rooms were beautifully decorated with smilax and white and pink roses. An avenue of palms had been arranged where the bridal party was to enter.

“We ought to have some holly,” Helen said, as the decorations were almost finished.

“Holly won’t go with smilax and roses,” said Fannie Drew, who was to be bridesmaid, and was assisting in the preparations.

“What shall we do?” queried Helen, perplexed. “Harry’s father has had such a lot of nice boughs sent over, and I do hate to disappoint him.”

“Well, he’ll have to be disappointed for once,” said Corine. “I should think he would be satisfied with the mistletoe. We have given it the very best place—I did so want to have a wedding bell there.”

“Why not decorate the dining-room with the holly?” suggested Fannie; and so it was decided.

On the table they strewed roses and trailed smilax, but the walls were given up to the holly, and the effect was very pretty.

The decorations were all finished. It was time to go up stairs to dress.

“Oh, how I do dread it!” exclaimed Helen, as they started up the stairway.

“You look more as if you had never wished for anything more heartily in your life than for twelve o’clock to-day,” rejoined Fannie. “Actually, Helen, I never saw you looking brighter and sweeter.”

“Now, Fannie, you’re teasing me. Do I really look all right?”

“I’ll leave it to Corine, whether I am not telling the truth,” and they both turned to her.

“That’s right,” was her comment, “I never knew Fannie to express a truer judgment than that. But let’s hurry and get her married before all this beauty vanishes;” and they went on and began to don the lovely dresses,—“dreams,”

Harry had called them. Erwin was less poetical: “Rags,” said that practical youngster.

But now, there is no necessity for you and me to worry through all the anxious little details that filled the last moments. For us it is twelve o'clock, and the bridal procession is approaching.

Milda Trapp is at the piano. The strains of the wedding march from “*Lohengrin*” are stealing on the air.

John Perkins and Fannie Drew are ushering in the train. Then comes Corine, bearing Helen's flowers. Then Helen and Harry.

Never did bride look sweeter. She wore a gown of exquisite white silk, trimmed with real old lace, grandma's gift. She had received it from her grandmother, who had brought it from across the sea. How dainty and rich it appeared, clinging to the fair form of the bride. About her throat Helen wore a strand of splendid pearls, each one a perfect treasure. Mr. Chamberlain himself had put them there. Harry's mother had worn them when she was a bride. What could be more fitting than that they should adorn the beauty of our sweet Helen?

Where find a groom worthy of this fair bride? Here he is at her side. For certainly, if Harry did not look every inch a king's own son, my eyes are no judge of royalty.

The pastor met them there, under the mistletoe. The service was simple and brief. Then there were congratulations, and good wishes, and some good advice, and happy smiles, and—yes, some tears, too; precious, quiet tears of love that told Helen all that was in her mother's heart.

I wonder whether we bless God often enough for this precious gift of tears. What a solace they are, what a relief, what a way of expressing the heart's inmost feelings! And to think that there are eyes whose chiefest boast is that they have never yielded tears!

But we are forgetting the dinner. There were no tears at that. It was a triumph in its way, and it was noticed that the disposal of it was a similar triumph, each and every guest a victor. There was no need of appetizers in the form of relishes and hot sauces. Harry's inexhaustible fund of good spirits, leading off a like fund that seemed to be present in all the others, was appetizer enough. And, what can be said of few dinners of this sort, the meal was really enjoyed.

The bride and the groom were to leave on the early evening train for the south, expecting to leave C—— the next morning for Florida. Harry had not been farther south than Louisville on his previous trip, and he was curious to see the sunny south-

land. Helen would have preferred a trip through the northwest, but that was out of the question in the winter time, so she was perfectly delighted to take the southern trip. They left amid a shower of rice, and a perfect volley of old shoes fired under the direction of Erwin. The guests all stayed to spend the remainder of the evening at the Doners'.

“I don't like this thing of young people's getting married and then popping away as though a cannon had been fired,” said the deacon. And when he found that nothing else would do but to let the young couple leave at once, he insisted that the others must stay. They were all glad enough to do so.

All the members of the class of '81 were present. None of them had yet deserted Riverton. They held an informal meeting in the library that evening and discussed old school days. Tom was again president. And such a time as they did have!

“After all,” said the irrepressible Fannie, “I don't see why we should all begin to feel old just because Helen is married.”

Why she said this no one could imagine, for they were all acting more like children than like grown-ups. Corine called Fannie's attention to this, whereat Jim Stevens saw a chance for one of his droll remarks.

"I guess Fannie was thinking ahead a few months, of her own wedding, eh 'Tom?" And at that Tom grew somewhat disconcerted, and Fannie declared:

"Tom Green, you're just as hateful as you ever were at school, so there; and I think it's real mean."

"Why, Fannie," protested the innocent Tom, "I didn't do anything. It was Jim there."

"Yes, but you gave it all away by blushing and"—and seeing what a blunder she had made, and perceiving what a roar was greeting her, she covered her face with her hands and rushed to the parlor, where the older guests were assembled.

This only made matters worse; for, when she had disappeared, they all besieged Tom, and he was finally compelled to tell them, "Next June." When Fannie came back they gave her a warm reception.

Here we will leave them for a while, Harry and Helen speeding away to the south-land, the class of '81 in session as of old, and the deacon in the parlor surrounded by his dearest friends. We can imagine that, when they separated late that Christmas night, it was with good wishes for the wedded pair, with warm esteem for their host, the deacon, and undoubtedly with that which so naturally fills the heart when folks have spent pleasant hours of friendship with each other and the Lord at Christmas tide, good will toward all men.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. HELEN.

HARRY and his wife—how strange that sounded to them all for a while. They did not return to Riverton on their way north from Florida. They had spent the most delightful four weeks of their lives, up to that time, in the land of flowers. Then they went directly to their new home in X.

Harry had proposed that they board for a time, but Helen had disposed of that idea summarily enough. It was against all her theories of life, and she insisted that they would have a regular home at the very outset, kitchen and all, and that she would be sole housekeeper. When Harry protested that it would throw too much work on her shoulders at once, and that she ought to be free from any household cares for at least a year or two, she laughed at him and told him that she was sorry to disappoint him at the very beginning, but that that was not the kind of woman he had married. Harry, far from being disappointed, was happier than ever. He entered into the work of setting up

the new household with as much interest as Helen herself showed. They had been abundantly remembered with gifts by their numerous friends on the occasion of their marriage. It seemed to both of them that they had more friends than they had ever had any idea of. "And," Harry remarked, laughing, "'A friend in need is a friend indeed.'"

"I guess we are not exactly in need, Harry," was Helen's comment. "But it does seem as if we had enough gifts to set up a whole house-keeping establishment, doesn't it?" But when they came to furnish the handsome two-story brick which they had rented on A—— Street, only half a block from W—— Avenue, they found that they needed a great many more things than they had.

Then there were days and days of shopping to do, and a happy task it was, for they always went shopping together. Harry soon found that the old saying of a woman's spending so much time shopping is not true when her husband supplies her with an adequate portion of money, and goes with her to share the burden of this most exacting and important task.

The house was, in truth, a beautiful home after they had it completely furnished.

"I almost wish we weren't fixed so fine, Harry," said Helen, as they stood together, surveying the

general effect after it was all finished. "It makes me think of the hundreds of poor people who are not so well off as we are. But I believe we would be just as happy, even if we had only a little cottage, don't you?"

"I know I would, if I had you with me in the cottage," said he. "But I don't see how you could be happy having only a good-for-nothing like I am about."

"O hush, Harry. You know you are the best and truest and noblest man in all the world. Come, let's go to supper now. And remember, after supper we must go and order some groceries and things; for to-morrow, Mister Man, you will have to begin to subsist on your wife's cooking."

"Which will be a tremendous risk, seeing that I have subsisted on it many a day down at Deacon Doner's in Riverton," added he.

The next day Helen's housekeeping life began in real earnest. She cried a little as Harry put on his overcoat to go out to the factory and she thought of being left alone until noon. To tell the truth, the prospect did seem somewhat dreary. But after he had gone she bravely wiped away the tears, and planned a glorious dinner for him. Then she sat down before her dainty little writing-desk, which was a gift from Harry himself, and wrote a

long letter to Corine. Then she set herself about preparing the noon meal, and, before she expected it, she heard Harry's step on the porch.

The first dinner was a complete success. Harry was so much pleased with it, and showed his pleasure so plainly, that Helen could not bear to make him sad by crying when he left again after dinner. He promised that he would be home early that afternoon so that they could go skating, as one of the men at the factory had told him that there was splendid ice on the river.

"You remember where we went boating last summer, don't you, Helen?"

"Yes, and sailing too," she answered, laughing.

"That's the place," he assented. "But we'll try to have better luck with our first skate here than we had with our first sail."

"All right. I'll have an early supper ready when you get back."

How could she cry then? Only a few tear-drops appeared and lingered in her eyes a while after he had jumped on the W—— Avenue street-car. And that was the last time that she "acted the baby," as she herself termed it.

The next week Irma and Mr. Chamberlain came up to X., so there was plenty of company to keep her from getting lonely. When Mr. Chamberlain

left, a week later, Irma still stayed. In May Mr. and Mrs. Doner came up for a stay of two weeks, taking Irma back home with them. As Helen and Harry intended going to Riverton early in June to attend Tom's and Fannie's marriage, expecting to stay over for the High School commencement, (Erwin was in the graduating class), there was a great deal to be done during the next few weeks by way of getting ready for the first visit home; so Helen did not suffer with a very prolonged spell of the "blues" after her folks left.

She had by this time formed quite a list of acquaintances in X. also. As she was so much liked by every one, she and Harry were well supplied with invitations here and there and hither and thither. They were both great lovers of sociability, and frequently entertained their friends.

The visit home that June was only the first of a series that was carried on regularly, three or four being made each year. Helen sometimes remarked that people would think she was sorry she had been married, as she came home so often, but concluded that it was nobody else's affair if she chose to take advantage of the shortness of the distance that separated X. from Riverton, and keep in touch with her old home life. She was convinced that her visits at home would not harm her.

Helen's folks visited her almost as often as she visited them. Indeed, it was seldom that any length of time passed and none of her people were with her at X. And thus the days and weeks and months and years rolled happily onward.

Helen did not weary of her housekeeping work. Of course she had her trials, as the rest of us do. The experiments she tried in the kitchen were not always successful. The dealers did not always tell her the truth about the wares she was examining to purchase. But these were trifling matters. They scarcely succeeded in ruffling her smooth brow into wrinkles, and as for her placid disposition, they did not even dimple its surface.

She gained much from being with Harry; notably his habit of seeing the humorous side of anything. If he fell on the street, he would pick himself up out of the snow and say, "Well, somebody had a good laugh out of my tumble, at any rate." If he lost a dollar on the street, he would contentedly remark, "Just think how happy some poor fellow will be when he finds that." If Helen ruined a batch of cookery, he would say, "O, well, that will help the poor storekeeper. We'll have to buy something else instead, now."

"I never saw such a man in all my life," was Helen's constant observation. Gradually she ac-

quired the same habit, and, uniting as it did with her own sweet good nature, it served to make her only the more charming.

Their home life was a religious one. There was a blessing invoked on every meal, whether they were alone or had guests to share their board. There was a devotional exercise every morning and every evening. They would read a chapter from God's Bible, reading the verses alternately. After that Harry would offer a prayer. Then Helen would seat herself at her dear piano, which she had brought with her from home, and together they would sing a hymn. In the evenings they would sometimes spend a half hour or more singing the sweet sacred music whose presence makes so much for happiness in the Christian home. From the outset they had subscribed for several religious papers. These they perused faithfully, often reading to one another. They frequently sat on the porch in the evenings and drifted into long talks on questions of religion, sometimes discussions of scriptural doctrines, sometimes discussions of Christian duty and privileges ; sometimes speaking of God's goodness to them, sometimes speaking of the happiness that God held in store for them in heaven. In these ways, with religion and piety, with mutual love and kindness, with faithful atten-

tion to duty, with friendship and sociability, their married life was for them what married life can be for all pious, industrious, agreeable, Christian people, whether they be in moderate or in millionaire circumstances, a life of continued *real* pleasure and happiness.

One thing that troubled them was that there was no English church of their Lutheran faith in the city. Harry had called on a German minister and inquired whether his church had no English preaching, and had been informed that they had none whatever. Helen had hoped that perhaps they might find a church where they could hear a Lutheran sermon in English at least occasionally. She was much disappointed when Harry returned with the intelligence that there was no accommodation at all for them. The pastors of several other denominations had called on them, and had been very polite and attentive, inviting them to worship with them and assuring them of a hearty welcome. But Helen said that she could never feel at home, except in her own dear Lutheran church. They therefore attended services in the nearest Episcopal church, retaining their membership at St. Luke's in Riverton. They generally timed their visits to Helen's home so that they could commune there.

The fact that they had no church of their own

faith at X. did not deter them from doing the work that every church member should do. Helen had soon discovered that there was much poverty and suffering in the great city. This was something she had never seen at Riverton; for, although there were families there who were poor, there were none that were reduced to actual want for life's necessities, and very few who would allow themselves to be treated as objects of charity. The experiences at X. were, for this reason, entirely new to Helen. Still, for a nature like hers, it did not require long acquaintance with the new circumstances to determine her in the course she should pursue over against those of the large city's unfortunates that came within her reach. With Harry's assistance and counsel she instituted quite a little system of charitable work.

She soon learned that the so-called charity that was being carried on by the city through its Board of Poor Commissioners failed to attain the main object of all true charity, that of not only relieving the bodily distress of the sufferers, but of reaching their hearts also, and dispelling the discontent and unhappiness and distrust and hopelessness from these.

She found so much suffering that her opportunities exceeded her abilities, so she determined to

make a bold effort. She asked a number of her acquaintances to meet at her home one afternoon. Among them were the wives of two of the pastors who had called on her and Harry. After they had all gathered, she explained to them her object in calling them together. She wanted them to take a hand with her in the work, selecting a certain district and resolving systematically to look after the poor and forsaken in that district, not exactly as church members, but as being neighbors to these unfortunate ones, and owing them sympathy and kindness.

"Well, I'm willing to give my share," said Mrs. Worth, the banker's wife, as Helen finished speaking.

"But, dear Mrs. Worth," said she, "it isn't mainly giving that we need. It is visiting these poor people, and showing them that we take a real personal interest in their well-being, that will do them more good than supplying them with money and clothing."

"But," said her next door neighbor, "aren't Poor Commissioners appointed by the city, and can't these poor people see them and have a chat with them? I am sure our husbands pay high enough taxes to keep these different city departments going."

"I wish you would go down to the Poor Commissioners' office some day, Mrs. Taylor," said Helen, "and find out by seeing for yourself how much comfort there is to be gotten there by the poor creatures, some of whom are almost afraid to enter the doors. Besides, there are a great many who are ashamed to apply to the Poor Commission even for bodily aid. I would just like to hear what one of the Commissioners would say if one of the applicants would sit down and ask to have a little Christian consolation given him in his misfortunes."

"But, my dear Mrs. Chamberlain," it was the portly Mrs. Duncan that said this, "you are too enthusiastic about this whole idea. Do you not know that the majority of the poor are undeserving wretches, who are either not so badly off as they pretend to be, or else responsible themselves for the condition in which you find them?"

"And then," put in Mrs. Weller, "you know there are the churches. We have an alms-box in the vestibule at our dear St. Stephen's, and I, for my part, drop a dime in regularly on the first Sunday of every month."

Helen argued the question with them until she saw that it was a hopeless case, and then, although there were tears in her heart, she fought them

bravely down, and adroitly changed the topic of conversation in a gradual manner, so that, when the ladies left, they had all forgotten what a disagreeable subject had been up for discussion.

Mrs. Storm, whose husband, Dr. Storm, was rector of St. Stephen's, remained after the others had gone, and sympathized cordially with Helen in her disappointment.

"I have tried the same thing myself, my dear child," she said in a motherly way that Helen loved in her, "and with exactly the same results. I had hoped that you would have more success, because the ladies all like you so much."

She and Helen agreed that they would do what they could together.

"Two are better than one at any rate," smiled Helen, as she opened the door for her friend to pass out. "We will go out to the west end to-morrow, Mrs. Storm, and I will introduce you to some of the poor people whom I have been visiting."

"And some other day I will do the same for you;" and the kind woman went.

Harry just then arrived, and he fairly boiled with indignation at the heartlessness of the women whom Helen had endeavored to interest in her project. But when Helen rehearsed Mrs. Weller's speech for him, he burst out in a hearty laugh,

and soon he had Helen all smiles again, and in some measure consoled for her lack of success.

"After all," she concluded, as she cleared away the tea things and began to get herself ready for the concert they were to attend that evening, "Mrs. Storm and I can get more done than that promiscuous crowd could have accomplished. I suppose it was a mistake to try to get them together;" and she enjoyed the concert that evening as thoroughly as if nothing unpleasant had occurred.

She and Mrs. Storm succeeded in accomplishing quite a work of rescue and relief; but Helen and Harry soon became interested in another venture, which bade fair to engage all of their available time and energy.

The district where Helen had found so many poor people, some of them not in extreme want of this world's goods, but all of them sadly craving attention from those who were better placed in the scale of social advantage than they themselves, had no church. A mission had been attempted a few years before, but it had been abandoned because sufficient interest in the work had not been taken by the people to warrant the outlay necessary for carrying it on successfully. Helen proposed that she and Harry begin a Sunday-school out there.

"It will require a very slight outlay on our part," she explained. "We can rent one of the empty cottages for little money, and a little planning will go a good way toward making it attractive. The main thing will be the work we apply to it ourselves, and that we can give cheerfully."

It did not take any urging to secure Harry's co-operation in this plan. Soon St. Luke's Sunday-school had been begun, but not before Helen had written to Pastor Denton, asking his advice. He not only fully approved of the idea, but gave the young missionaries some practical advice as to how the work could be conducted with the greatest assurance of success. He also sent them some charts and books, and a catalogue of Sunday-school supplies.

It was up-hill work at the first, but from the beginning there were half a dozen families who stood faithfully by Helen, families whom she had assisted and visited in their troubles. As the Sunday-school began to impress the dwellers of the west end with its intention of staying whether they wanted it to stay or not, they began to gain a respect for it that induced them to "drop in" one by one to see what was being done there. No one who attended once could resist the friendly invitation to come again, and those who came two or three times were won for the

school. So St. Luke's of the west end in X. slowly prospered, until the roll counted one hundred and over fifty names of regular attendants. This progress covered a period of several years, however, and represented much faithful work and much earnest prayer and much wise planning.

Pastor Denton was in regular receipt of reports from Helen. One day he wrote: "I shall probably soon have a surprise for you. I will not say much at this writing, but will only hint that possibly St. Luke's mission Sunday-school at X. may be the forerunner of St. Luke's English Lutheran church at X., State of —".

"I wonder what he means," said Helen, as they perused the pastor's letter.

"Well, he evidently means that it is within the range of possibility that we will have an English Lutheran congregation here in the near future," answered Harry. "Wouldn't that be fine?"

"Yes, but how is it to be?" asked she.

"I don't see either," returned he. "But I know this, that the Reverend Denton doesn't often indulge in dreams."

They were not left in ignorance long. Three days later the mail brought them a letter that gave them a full explanation, and, in consequence of the explanation, great joy.

The case was this. Of course Helen and Harry had not been alone in caring for the Sunday-school after it had grown to larger proportions. There were times when Helen's home duties required long absences on her part from the work in the west end. As interested as she was in that work, she had never lost sight of the principle that her home work demanded and deserved her first attention. So it was with Harry. Sometimes he was absent from the city as long as three weeks in succession, looking after the interests of his business. He saw very clearly that it would not do for him to suppose that it would take care of itself while he was missionating in the west end. Besides, he correctly reasoned that if he allowed his business to fail he might be compelled to leave the city entirely; and what would have become of St. Luke's mission school then? And so, as deeply as they both were concerned for the welfare of the school, they attended to their nearer duties first.

It was fortunate, under these circumstances, that they were not alone in managing the school. By the time it had increased to so large proportions that the cottage was too small and they were compelled to lease a store-room that happened to be vacant, they had met other English Lutheran people in X. who were in the same predicament as that in

which they themselves were, without a church home of their own. These they had readily succeeded in interesting in the work; and, although they were still looked up to as the leaders, they had an able corps of assistants, and the work did not materially suffer when they were obliged to be absent.

Pastor Denton had taken account of all these things, and now he wrote to them that he had for some time been corresponding with the secretary of the Board of Missions, and they had now decided to send a man to X. to look over the field, and, if it proved as auspicious as the reports seemed to indicate, they would locate a pastor there as a permanent missionary.

This was joyful news indeed to the Chamberlains. All the more joyful was the occasion when the president of the Board himself arrived, and, on looking over the work that had been accomplished, and attending the school on the following Sunday, expressed himself as astonished at the results of their work, and assured them that he would pledge himself to do all in his power that a man be located there at an early day. This was in the fall, four years almost after our young friends had been married.

In this time some other events had taken place,

which I must not fail to mention. I have been so much interested in the growth of the Sunday-school that I did not think of them at the time. When the Reverend Doctor R., the president of the Board of Missions, came into the house with Harry, who had met him at the station, and had shaken hands with Helen, whom he had met before, having lodged at her father's house in Riverton several times while she was still at home, he stooped down to a little toddler who had come forward and now stood surveying him critically, and said:

"Well, and who is this?"

"I's Face Toreen Samberlin," was the answer.

"Ah yes," continued the kind old man, "and how old are you?"

"Two years old," the toddler replied.

"And have you a kiss for me?" he asked.

"No sir; tisses all for mamma an' papa." Whereat little Faith Corine ran over to her papa, and was soon perched up high in his proud arms.

"What a bright little one she is," said Doctor R., admiring her. "And how old is the baby?" turning to the little dimpled bunch that Helen was holding in her lap.

"Baby was three months old yesterday," answered Helen. "Don't you think she is large for her age?"

"Yes indeed," said the Reverend Doctor. "What a pleasant home you have," he added, looking about the room. "I suppose you feel content with your new life, Miss Do—, excuse me, Mrs. Chamberlain?"

"O yes, sir, indeed," replied Helen. "I would not want to be without my husband and this little Mischief and Baby and my home, for any thing in all the world beside."

The tea bell was rung, and they went out to a dainty supper, where we will not disturb them.

CHAPTER XIX.

CORINE.

THE promised pastor did not reach X. until the following spring. A number of men had successively been called, but each one had failed to see his way clear to accepting the call. The Board might have cut matters short by being less particular, but they recognized the importance of the field and the value of the work that had already been done, so they were determined to secure the ministry of a capable man.

They were finally successful, and great was the excitement within the little circle of Sunday-school workers when they heard that the Reverend P—— had accepted the call, and would be with them in May to look over the ground and to see about securing a suitable dwelling for his family. He had now come, had made a splendid impression, and had gone again, in order to take leave of his former congregation and to bring his family and his household effects to X. He had been the guest of the Chamberlains and had just said "good bye." Still

Helen is bustling around just as if her visitor had not gone.

The reason for this is that she is expecting company on the next day. Her guests are to be—Harry's father, and Corine. She and Harry had not seen Mr. Chamberlain since he had been with them over four years before, just after they had settled in their new home. Neither he nor they had had the least idea at that time that it would be so long a while until they saw each other again. Mr. Chamberlain had intended to be absent two years at the longest. When the two years were up and he should have started to America, he suddenly decided to wind up all his affairs, dispose of his business, and come over and settle down with Helen and Harry for the remainder of his life. His own home and his own country were very dear to him; but Harry and Helen and the little girl whom he had never seen were still dearer to his affectionate old heart. Why should he stay over there all alone, leading a solitary, cheerless life, when he might be passing his old days in the sunny brightness and warmth of his children's love?

He had delayed coming to this decision, as he still entertained hopes that Harry would perhaps return to England with his family. Now all expectations of an occurrence of that kind had van-

ished from his mind, and he decided to take the step that meant so much to him in every way. He had hoped to get his affairs settled in a short time; but unforeseen complications had arisen, and he was not free to leave until the fall preceding the fourth anniversary of the marriage. By that time the season was so far advanced that he dreaded making the voyage alone. He had therefore reluctantly decided to wait until the spring, and now Helen and Harry were expecting him on the morrow.

Corine was coming, too. Helen had not seen her for more than two years. She had remained in Riverton some time after Helen's marriage, and during that time Helen had seen her often, although Corine had never yet been Helen's guest in her home at X. Later she had gone to spend a winter with her Aunt Carrie, who had married a wealthy New York lawyer and was now a society woman in the great metropolis, Corine's intention being to read law in her uncle's office. She did this quite faithfully, though she was, in addition, thoroughly introduced to "society" that winter. Her brilliant reception pleased her aristocratic aunt so well that she decided to keep her for the summer, and take her along to Newport. Then, without asking any questions of Mrs. Hereford, she imperiously dictated that Corine must spend another winter with her.

Mrs. Hereford was disposed to yield quite readily, since she imagined that Corine was being vastly benefited by her association with the country's "best" people. As for Corine, she was in her element. The work in her uncle's office was precisely what she wanted. Besides, the people of her aunt's "set" were just then all enraptured with the reform fad. Reform clubs and societies and associations were "the rage." Corine, who with her acknowledged ability and her well-developed notions on the reform subject was hailed as a veritable treasure, was soon installed as secretary of two of these societies. She took an active part in the work itself, delivering addresses, not only at the meetings of the society, but also at public gatherings called for the purpose of reaching the "masses." She became quite a figure in the work, and was more than once spoken of in the daily papers as having made a "remarkable" or a "startling" address at such-and-such a hall to such-and-such a meeting.

While she was finally making her preparations to leave New York for her home at Riverton, she had received an urgent invitation to address a monster mass-meeting at X. The girls employed in the pearl-button factories at that place had been induced by the labor unions to go out on a strike,

and they were suffering severely as a consequence. It had been decided to have this monster meeting, conducted under the auspices of the labor unions, for the girls' benefit, the object being to raise funds for the successful continuance of the strike, and at the same time to create a public sentiment in sympathy with the striking girls. One of the labor leaders of New York, who had been called to X. to assist in the management of the strike, had recommended Corine to the committee, and they had secured her services as the main attraction. This was the occasion of Corine's first visit to Helen in her X. home.

Corine well knew that Helen did not at all approve of the course she had taken. The most of her other friends were full of admiration for her energy and determination, and spoke highly of her success. While Helen acknowledged that she had in truth shown great perseverance and ability, still she could not but regard her successes as failures. It made no noticeable difference in their friendship for each other, for she thought as much of her cousin as ever. But it would have pleased her more than she could tell if Corine would only look at the problem of her life from a more sensible standpoint. So, while she heartily disapproved of Corine's speaking at the mass meeting

in the Auditorium, she welcomed her gladly as her guest.

Both Harry's father and Corine arrived on schedule time, and such a greeting as they both received! Faith Corine was willing to go to her grandpa at once without any further introduction than his invitation, and from that moment they were inseparable comrades. She would leave anyone else, even her mother, to go to him. As for him, he would have done almost anything, within reason or without, for the little elf. He said it was worth the whole trip from England to hold her on his lap five minutes, and stroke her sunny curls. To Helen's delight, he insisted that she looked exactly like her.

Corine did not fare so well at Faith's hands. She had set much store by meeting her little namesake, and was chagrined exceedingly when she found that the little one would have nothing to do with her. Indeed, Faith's distrust of Corine was as marked as was her perfect confidence in her grandpapa. It pained Corine deeply, but there was no remedy for her pain, as Faith would listen to no entreaties; and when she went to Corine at her mother's express command, it was so perfunctorily and reluctantly done that Corine preferred not to have her come at all. She solaced herself by holding the baby, which was not so critical. Strange

to say, with all her undomestic notions, Corine was passionately fond of children.

Corine and Helen did not find opportunity for a good old-time chat with each other until the children had been taken to bed that evening and they had repaired to Corine's chamber, where her trunk had just been put by the expressman. They went there for the ostensible purpose of unpacking it, but who ever heard of two girls' getting a trunk unpacked together when they had not seen each other for two whole years and more? Their conversation will undoubtedly be genuinely interesting, too. As they have no objections, you and I will sit down in the adjoining room to watch the babies and—listen to the babies' mamma and auntie.

"How long were you in Riverton, Corine?" Helen is asking.

"Oh, only just long enough to say 'How do?' and 'Good bye!' But I was there long enough to notice a few wonderful changes, at any rate."

"I guess I do not notice them so much. I am never gone long enough at one time."

"Well, that's true. A person doesn't notice changes so much when they go on right under her attention. I was so surprised, when mamma and I were driving from the station, to meet a big van, and more surprised still to read on the side in large

letters, 'Perkins Bros.' Cartage and Drayage Co.' Of course mamma had written to me that the two new railroads had come to Riverton, and that the population had more than doubled when the big railroad shops were built and the implement works were located there; but a person doesn't get much idea of a thing of that kind unless she sees it with her own eyes. To think of our little Riverton, boasting of over seventeen thousand inhabitants."

"Yes, it does seem strange. Hadn't anybody written you about John's new venture? You know he is still keeping up his delivery, running three wagons on that alone. And since he has started the cartage business he has about trebled his work. There is a great deal of transferring between the three depots, and it seems John gets it all. At any rate he has three large wagons busy continually besides his delivery wagons. Of course he does moving and all kinds of trucking, too. He told me a few weeks ago when he was here, that he himself does not load and drive now; just superintends the business, and keeps the books and looks up trade. And you hadn't heard about all this, and he the person you are the most interested in of any in the whole wide world?" Helen was smiling provokingly. As she looked at Corine she saw that her cousin was really blushing.

"Well, it's queer that John did not tell me," she said, only half aloud. But Helen caught the words.

"John tell you? How could he tell you? Where did you see him, I wonder. And when?"

Corine had thoughtlessly betrayed her own secret. But she would try to hide it again.

"Never mind about that, Nellie. I'll tell you about that after a while. I want to talk about Riverton now. Is there any more about John, that you know?"

"Yes, there is. Do you remember where Fannie Drew's father built that fine new house?"

"Why, of course I do. But what has that to do with John Perkins?"

"Only this. He has bought the corner lot, next to the Drews', and has built a house that beats theirs all to pieces."

Corine drew a long breath.

"It's awfully queer how nobody has ever told me a word about this. But do you know, mamma never would talk about him with me. She must have been afraid that I would take too much of an interest in him. Why didn't you write me about it, Nellie?"

"Well, I suppose I thought your mother kept you informed on the Riverton doings, and you

know we always had enough other things to write about. Besides, didn't I say something about your presiding over the Perkins mansion as its proud mistress, in a letter a few months ago?"

"Yes, but I thought you were only teasing me and making fun of that little frame house where John's folks lived. I suppose there is a lot more about him?"

"The only other thing that I can think of now is that he was elected councilman last month, at the spring election, you know."

"Well, well. But that's enough about John. He's getting so high up we will not dare to think of him any more. How did we begin talking about him?"

"Don't you know? You spoke about having seen one of his vans."

"O yes, and that reminds me. We had not driven more than a block farther when we saw a smart little trap come rolling along, and there sat Tom Green and Fannie, and Fannie holding a little boy. I couldn't resist the temptation, so we stopped them right then and there. She says the little fellow is seventeen months old already. Fannie and Tom seem to get along as peacefully as you please. Who would ever have thought it, after seeing the way they always quarreled?"

"Yes, I've visited there. I was with them two days last summer, and I know they are perfectly devoted to each other."

"Are any of the others married, besides Ada Lansen and Jim Stevens?"

"Why, yes. You surely know that Posey Berner was married last month. Didn't you receive an invitation?"

"O yes, I had forgotten about that. Who is this Smith that she married?"

"He is a traveling man from Chicago. He seems to be an excellent man, from all I can hear. He is the son of an old school friend of Mr. Berner."

"And whom did Jim Stevens catch?"

"Jim Stevens? Why, his wife is a very nice little body. Her parents live here in X., but I have never made their acquaintance. Did any one tell you of the June weddings that are coming?"

"No, whose?"

"Mary's and Milda's. Mary is to be married to one of Ada Lansen's brothers, and Milda's beau is a young German minister from somewhere in Pennsylvania."

"I always forget who Ada's husband is."

"Why, don't you remember, the summer we spent in England she came up here to X. with

Mary Charman? She met him here that summer. He is a newspaper man of some sort, and they are living somewhere in the West."

"Well, I suppose they'll all be married by and by, and I'll be the only sensible one left."

"The only deluded one, you should say, Corine. But, if you're done with the rest now, I want you to tell me about yourself and John. What is it?"

"Pshaw! I thought you would have forgotten about that by this time."

"You didn't think any such thing, and what's more, you are just dying to tell me."

"Nellie Chamberlain, you know that isn't so, and to punish you I am just exactly going to make you wait for it till to-morrow morning."

"You'll not get any rest all night then, for I'll not stir a step out of this room until you do tell me, Corine Hereford, and you might as well bow to the inevitable now as later."

"I declare, you're the same stubborn girl you used to be, Nellie. I should think your husband would have got you broken of that by this time."

"Now, Corine, let's lay all jokes aside, as Erwin says; and tell me all about it."

"Well, Nellie, it was like this. I was walking along Broadway in New York one day in March, when whom should I see coming out of a store but

John Perkins? I never was so astonished in my life. He saw me as soon as I saw him, and he came up as nice as you please and shook hands with me. I asked him to what kind Providence I owed the pleasure of seeing him there, and he explained to me that it was in connection with the express robbery near Riverton. You heard about that, didn't you?"

"Yes, of course. Go on."

"Well, it seems John happened to overhear a conversation between the station agent and one of the express messengers on the night of the robbery, and this conversation had distinct bearing on the robbery. You know they suspected the agent and some of the messengers. I heard on my way up here that the probability is that they will be convicted. The directors of the company were having a meeting in New York when the detectives telegraphed them about this conversation, and they at once wired that they would like to have John come to New York and relate the circumstances there in detail. As he was in one sense an employé of the company (I see how he meant that now), he thought best to go. After he had finished his business with the railroad magnates he decided to spend some time sight-seeing, and that is how I came to run across him. His trip to New York

was to be kept a secret, though now that these men are convicted I guess there is no harm in telling it. You can't imagine how glad I was to see him, for to tell you the truth, Nellie, I was getting rather tired of the everlasting receptions, and circles, and meetings, and all the rest of it. Very few of the young men ever ventured to ask my company anywhere, as I was accounted a strict reformer, without any ideas except such as were connected with the great work of helping the masses and lifting the down-trodden. Of course, John knew me better than that. He prolonged his stay a week beyond the limit of his original intentions, and he and I had an elegant time. We went everywhere. It was the most fun, dodging my acquaintances, lest they should discover that I was just a plain human being after all. I was awfully nice to John, and he seemed to enjoy himself as much as I did myself. Auntie thought he was just fine. I tell you, Nellie, he has improved wonderfully. Not that he needed improvement exactly, but he has acquired such a distinguished manly air, a good deal like Harry's. The only thing that vexed auntie was that he kept himself so strictly out of reach of her 'set.' She did succeed in inveigling him into an 'evening' once, and he was completely 'lionized.' Would you believe it, Nellie? He

took it all as though he moved in court circles every day of his life. He's a born lord, sure."

"And in all that time he didn't say anything about his new transfer business?"

"Not a word. Only that he did a little hauling now and then for the railroad company. Think of it! A genuine lord talking about his doing hauling for a railroad company. He wouldn't have told me that if I had not caught him up when he talked about his being an employé of the company."

"Well, what else?"

"Who said there was anything else?"

"I know there is, and I want to know what it is."

"Well, I told you how sweet I was to him. I guess I overdid it a little, for he seemed to take it as encouragement, and the evening before we left, as we were taking a farewell walk in Central Park, he asked me whether I couldn't change my mind about the answer I had given him out at the fishing grounds about four years ago. I was almost sorry when I had to tell him 'No' again. But I explained to him that the life I had mapped out for myself was only just beginning in its reality; that what I had done so far had been merely preparatory work, and that, if he could only see what a

great good I had begun to accomplish, he would not think me harsh in refusing to reconsider my first decision. He said nothing more on that subject, and treated me just the same as before. I pitied him, but to this moment I do not know whether he cared for my pity or not."

"Is that all?"

"Yes, that is all. He left New York the next day, and I have not seen him since."

"And he didn't tell you a word about their new house, either?"

"Not a syllable. I wonder why he kept so quiet about that? But to tell the truth, we did not say much about any Riverton affairs. Queer, isn't it? He might have known that I would be interested at least in his affairs."

"I'll tell you what, Corine. The reason why he didn't tell you is this. You see he had made up his mind to ask you that question again, and he didn't want it to seem as though he had told you those things as an inducement to accept him. I want to tell you something. John is here in town now. Harry saw him this morning at the bank. He has business that will keep him here two or three days, but he says that his main object in coming just at this time is to hear you speak."

"Nellie, you're only joking, aren't you?"

"No, indeed I am not."

The conversation must have grown absorbingly interesting, for we cannot distinguish a single word, only the hum of their voices for several hours. Then suddenly Helen said :

"Listen, the baby is crying. And O dear, just look at the time! It's after eleven. Good night, Corine. Shall we wake you in the morning?"

"Yes, call me early. I am an early riser when I have work on hand."

Corine kept herself in her own room most of the next day, coming down only to meals. She knew that the address that evening must be her supreme effort, and she resolved to spare no pains that would be necessary to make it an entire success. After dinner a committee from the unions called to give her some details about the local situation. They were gentlemanly men, and they made a good impression on Helen, who had met them at the door. She had had an idea that all persons in any way connected with a strike must be rough and disorderly, and had dreaded their visit. She was very glad to find herself mistaken about them.

After they had left, a committee of ladies came in a carriage to take Corine down to see the hall where she was to speak. And so the day wore away, and the momentous hour drew nearer.

At last it had come.

A close carriage drew up to the door. It contained the two women of the escort committee. They had come to take Corine to the scene of her great—would it be triumph or failure?

Helen and Harry and Mr. Chamberlain went down on the car. They had been provided by Corine with reserved-seat coupons, otherwise they would not have found even standing room.

The Auditorium was a vast hall, capable of seating at least five or six thousand persons. Temporary galleries had been erected, making room for a thousand more. Every available seat was occupied. The aisles were one tangle of standing, crowding forms.

On the platform, next to the presiding officer, and surrounded by some fifty vice-presidents, sat Corine, seemingly perfectly at home and at her ease in those trying moments. Her eye sparkled like that of a child anticipating a great pleasure. She moved a fan to and fro, as unconcerned as if she were sitting with Helen alone in her parlor. When the time came for her to address that great army of people, and the president had introduced her with a flattering eulogy, she arose with a strength and a self-control that was nothing short of remarkable.

Then came her address. The effect was tremendous, past describing. The first sentences she spoke, calm and collected, logical and assertive, caused a mighty hush to fall on all the audience. Some fifteen minutes she continued in this calm, logical strain. The subject matter was intensely interesting, diversified with figures and statistics, brightened with examples and illustrations. The language was perfect in its diction, clean-cut in its precision, heroic in its power.

She spoke of all men's equality. Then of the injustice that was meted out to many, thrust down from the plane of equality with others by oppression and violence. Then especially of woman's exile from her divine inheritance, the Canaan into which God had led her by creating her as man's equal. Then she pictured the lot of the striking girls, who had been struggling so bravely with a cruel world for life and for right. Turning to them, she gave them counsel and explained an original and ingenious plan of solution for all their difficulties. She proceeded to herald the dawn of a day when oppressions and wrongs, boycotts and strikes, would be unknown, when employer and employed would all together stand on the common ground that belonged to all by reason of their equal birth.

Her voice—it was this that astonished Helen most—seemed to have a momentum, a carrying power, that bore it to the farthest corner of that mighty space, yes, and that bore it down, deep down, into the hearts of those present with convincing penetration.

Then she seemed to rise. Her eloquence flashed fierier. Her sentences were shorter, terser, tenser. They seemed impassioned with an earnestness that was spell-binding. Lightnings flamed from her eyes, and again the fearful glow of furnace fires. The effect was striking. She seemed to increase in stature, to stand above earth with its woes and its wrongs, its shrieks and its moans, its sufferings and its dyings. On, up, into the far distance she seemed to mount, and with her, enchained in admiration, arose that countless mass of human souls. Upward they went, from the valleys to the mountain tops, from mountain peaks into the clouds, from the clouds to the stars, from stars and planets and suns into the boundless, unfathomable, illimitable, infinite Beyond.

Then, with an abruptness that was startling, she swept the hall with a queenly bow, and sat down with the dignity of an empress ascending her throne in state.

It was some seconds ere the audience recovered

from the spell which had been bound upon them. Then cheer on cheer rolled through the house like huge billows swelling shoreward.

The scene grew sensational. Men stood on chairs, waving every conceivable article they could lay hands on. Then they climbed on each others' shoulders. Women were scarcely less demonstrative than men. Flowers were showered on the stage in one great deluge. A few persons tore their jewels from them and cast them at Corine's feet. She had had her triumph. Had it been a man that had spoken, they would have borne him on their shoulders out of the hall, to Washington if need were, to make him absolute monarch of the land, king, emperor, dictator, whatever he listed.

The managing committee feared that harm might befall their speaker, and made hurried preparations to escort her from the hall to her carriage. The crowd divined their purpose and began to struggle out through a score of exits. They surged about the vehicle, eager to catch another glimpse of her whose mind had bound them in that wondrous thralldom.

As she was being conducted slowly through the throng, she had occasion to notice a thin, wasted man who stood in the row of men nearest the carriage. A half-starved boy clung to his hand.

"Wot's et all about, pop?" asked the child's shrill voice.

"The lady hez made a great speech, Mickey," answered the man. "She likes us, an' wants to help us, ye know."

"An' will Maggie an' Mary git work agin? An' will we hev enough to eat agin?" pursued the child.

"I doan know, Mickey. Mebbe we will. But the lady made a fine speech fer us, see?"

Corine could not wait to distinguish whether the boy "saw" or not, for the obstructing crowd had been parted and she was hurried to the carriage. But she herself did "see," and a sudden chill struck her heart, radiant with the brilliance of her triumph.

Her companions were overwhelming her with their words of extravagant praise and appreciation, as the carriage rolled swiftly toward A—— Street. She hardly heard them, and answered in a short, constrained, abstracted manner. They attributed this to her fatigue and the reaction from the high tension at which her nerves must have worked during that intense discourse, and excused her seeming incivility. In reality she was pondering over those innocent heart-broken words, "Will we hev enough to eat agin?"

Had she done anything to give those hungry toilers bread? Had she even given them real encouragement and comfort? Or was Helen right? Was she missing her opportunities in life? These questions were vexing her sorely. But by the time the carriage had reached the house she had again settled them all to her own satisfaction—at least, she pretended she had.

“Why, of course I am benefiting my fellow-men. Did they not rave over my address? Who ever heard that a person who was making the stir that I am creating stopped to ask whether she is doing as much good in the world as an old-fashioned woman like dear Helen, who spends all her time in the house, caring for her babies and cooking for her husband? The idea is absurd.”

The arrival of the gentlemen and Helen, just then, caused her to end her soliloquy. They had taken a coupé to come home, as the cars were all so crowded. They had been discussing the speech during the short drive home. Helen had at first thought that she would say nothing to Corine unless Corine would ask her for her opinion. She had remembered, however, how very unpleasant it is to appear in any public capacity before one's friends, and then, meeting them directly afterwards, to be greeted with no mention of the per-

formance at all. The sharpest criticism is more grateful, under these circumstances, than the exasperating silence that is so general on such occasions. For this reason, when they entered the room where Corine was standing before the grate, looking down into the fire, Helen went up to her at once and threw her arms about her neck and kissed her sincerely.

"We have been talking about it all the way home, Corine, and the jury is agreed. Do you care to hear the verdict?"

"I certainly do, Nellie, although I knew before I ever set foot in X. what it would be."

"Well, dear, this is what the men folks and I think. You certainly had a magnificent success. Harry and I have seen a great many audiences go wild with delight while we have been here, but neither of us has ever seen anything that was even a weak approach to the ovation that was given you to-night. You scored a perfect and complete success in what you attempted. But I still cling to the old notion that you would do more good in the long run by remaining in the ranks of plain, common, domestic women. Papa and Harry seem to agree with me, but I will let them speak for themselves."

"Yes, my child," said old Mr. Chamberlain as

he took her hand, "while I sincerely congratulate you on your complete and astonishing success in what you have conscientiously undertaken, I must indorse what Helen has so well expressed already. You have joined a movement which bodes no good to a world cursed by false moves. No good has ever come from attempts to contravene the order instituted by an all-wise Creator. The fine mold and exquisite organism of woman have been given her for nobler, diviner work than this that you have chosen. The subtile influence that you would exert if you would accept the place God has assigned to woman would be more lasting and more powerful for good than the influence exerted in the way that you have essayed to-night. But I have confidence that a mind as logical as that which you to-night have shown to be yours will, under God's guidance and the operation of His Holy Spirit, see these things in their true light sooner or later."

The old man's words were too evidently well-meant to offend Corine, so she simply said :

"I thank you, Mr. Chamberlain, but I do not think we will agree on the subject, so you will please all excuse me for this evening. I am very tired."

"Shall I go up with you, Corine?" asked Helen.

"No, Nellie dear ; I think I would rather be alone, please."

“Well, good night then. I hope you will rest well, you look so tired. If there is anything you need, ring for us. I will send Marie up with a cup of tea presently.”

Corine did wish to be alone. How often we have wished the same thing with as little success as she had that night. There are companions who will not heed our wishes, and they intrude on our most sacred moments unbidden. But no, not unbidden. For, is it not usually our own folly that insists on dragging them into our acquaintance? And can we wonder that, after we have by violence brought them to us, they will not leave again?

Alas, Corine! She could not banish certain pictures and certain words from her presence that night. It was long past the midnight hour when she finally fell asleep; and, when she did sleep, a half-starved boy who looked strangely like old Mr. Chamberlain was standing before her, and he was saying, “You have joined a movement which bodes no good to a world cursed by false moves. An’ will Maggie an’ Mary git work agin?”

CHAPTER XX.

THE GREAT STRIKE.

NOTHING more was said about the address the next day. There are times when people think and feel rather than speak, and this was one of them. Perhaps in Helen's case the quietness was partly due to another cause, however; Harry had made arrangements to leave on that day on a somewhat extended business trip that would require his absence from the city for at least a week. He would willingly have deferred the trip, but had already delayed it as long as he dared, as he did not wish to be absent from X. when the new pastor paid his first visit to the mission. Now that Pastor P—— had come and gone, there was no further excuse for his remaining at home.

He disliked to leave, it is true, as his father had just come, and as Corine was there. But he knew his father's strict business ideas, and therefore judged that he would be better pleased if he went away to attend to necessary affairs than if he neglected urgent business on account of showing a courtesy to his father and to his wife's cousin.

Harry was not mistaken. His father entirely approved of his decision to go, and when Harry offered an apology for leaving so soon after his arrival the old man only said: "Well, well, Harry, never mind about me. I'm going along with you."

"Why, papa," exclaimed Helen, "the idea of your knocking about with Harry on a business trip so soon after your fatiguing voyage! It will not do for you to think of such a thing."

"Pshaw, child," answered he, "I'm still as sound and tough as a stick. Besides, I want to see what kind of a business man my boy has grown to be." And in spite of her objections he went with Harry.

They went very early, leaving Helen and Corine to finish their breakfast alone. The girls had not yet left the table, when they heard a sound for which they had both been listening. It was the news-boy's voice, crying shrilly, "Payeepoah !!!" At the same moment they heard the *Morning News*, folded in a tight wad, flung against the door. Helen ran to fetch it, and they were soon reading the account of the mass-meeting, both sitting in the great rocker, with their heads laid close together.

The *News* contained a graphic account of the

speech, accompanied by a rough wood-cut that was intended to resemble Corine. They had a merry laugh over this, and then lost themselves in the account. Corine fairly blushed at the unstinted praise that had been showered upon her by the lavish hand that is the peculiar possession of the modern reporter. The article ended by prophesying a glorious future for "the talented young student of social problems, who, it is whispered, is not yet at the age of thirty."

But what an irony there sometimes is in concurrent events. Side by side with this column, in which the world was promised all kinds of rest and happiness and prosperity as a result of Corine's address, there was an account, under startling headlines, of another immense strike that had broken out in the very night when she was addressing that great multitude at the Auditorium.

In fact, just as she was closing with that sublime peroration, a committee which the street car employes had sent to the offices of the company to present the grievances of the men were leaving the offices after an unsatisfactory conference, and were pursuing their way to the headquarters of the street-car employes' association, where a meeting had been appointed for twelve o'clock that night.

Arriving there, this sub-committee entered into

session with the other members of the executive committee, and, when the men gathered at the appointed hour, the result reached by the committee was that a general strike on all the lines be recommended. The men were not slow to act on this advice. They were weary with their seventeen hours' toil of that day, and in no mood to dally long with a question that each one had been slowly deciding for himself during weeks and months preceding. With a spirit that surprised even some of the bolder leaders, they decided to go on strike in the morning. Not a single man was to report for duty.

Of course, the newspapers had their representatives at the hall, and, although none of them were admitted, they had no difficulty in obtaining possession of the facts from the men as they left the meeting.

Helen and Corine, whose whole attention had been absorbed by the account of Corine's great success, having finished reading that column, at once stumbled on the ugly headlines that began, "HORSES RESTING," "NOT A CAR TO LEAVE THE CITY RAILWAY BARNs THIS MORNING," and ended, "THE OUTLOOK IS SERIOUS AND THERE WILL BE TROUBLE."

The evening paper confirmed the prediction of

its morning contemporary. There had been trouble at several points in the city. The directors of the railway company were as defiant in their attitude as the men who were striking, and they had determined to force their cars through under police protection. The result had been a series of skirmishes between the strikers, who were surprisingly desperate considering the early stage of the strike, and the police, who seemed glad of a fair opportunity to exercise the savage part of their natures. Blood had been shed, and the outlook was dark indeed.

Helen was always deeply concerned when violence of this kind was reported in the papers. Her sympathetic nature could not remain disinterested under circumstances that were certain to entail suffering and misery on one or on many of her fellow beings. In this case she was doubly concerned.

“Think of those poor wounded fellows, being carried to their poor homes, where they will not receive proper care, where, likely, fever will set in, and leave them either dead or unfit to work for a long time. Oh, I think these strikes are the most horrible things! I don’t see why the employers and their men cannot agree. Our fathers never had any trouble with their men, Corine, and Harry

never has had, and he has discharged more than one incompetent man. I have been at the factory dozens of times and have often talked with the men about their families, and they all seem perfectly happy and contented. From their manner I know that they think all the world of Harry. What bothers me too about this strike is that I promised a poor sick woman at the west end that I would see her to-morrow and bring her some strengthening tonic. She has been sick so long, and is always so patient. Her husband is quite nice, too. He works at the west-end car barns. I just wonder whether he has joined the strike. I hope not, for I have talked to him about strikes, and told him how wrong I think they are. I remember once he said, 'Never fear about me, Miss,' (they always call me 'Miss'), 'I don't get much wages, but a little is better than none.' I would hate to find that he has broken his promise, but I know if he has they must be suffering, for they lived strictly from hand to mouth. If I could only think of some way to get out there."

"Why don't you take a cab?" suggested Corine.

"Don't you remember that last evening's paper stated that the cab and 'bus drivers have gone out on a sympathetic strike?"

"That's so. But say, Helen, I never knew that

you took any interest in the laboring men in that way. Do you actually go right into Harry's factory and talk to all sorts of men?"

"Why, of course I do. They are always glad to have me, too."

"And do you get around to their houses, and tell the men what they ought to do and what not?"

"Yes, sometimes."

"Well, who takes care of the house-work then?"

"Oh, that comes first. I don't do these other things unless I have time. But a person can generally manage to get her work done and have enough time to make a visit or two to sick people. It's just as easy to make that kind of visits as it is to make fashionable calls, and we all find time for those. The other item I mentioned, having a talk with the men occasionally, comes in just incidentally, when I go out to the factory to come home with Harry, or when the men happen to be at home when I call on their wives."

The next morning's paper brought better news. It reported that the strikers had had several conferences with the railway managers, and that the difficulty would undoubtedly be settled soon. Toward evening the girls were surprised to see a few cars passing down W—— Avenue, and soon they noticed that they were running regularly.

The evening paper had it that the strike was ended, the men and the company having compromised by yielding a few points each.

"I am so glad," said Helen; "we will go out and see Mrs. Schneider to-morrow morning, Corine. I know she will not blame me for not keeping my promise, for she will know that it was impossible for me to come. You'll go with me, will you not?"

"Of course I will. But come, let's go to bed now. I'm tired enough to sleep standing against the wall. We must have been talking awfully much to-day, for I don't see what else could make me so tired."

Early on the following morning Helen prepared the basket she had been wanting to take to the sick woman, and they started away.

"I'll not be gone more than two hours and a half at the most, Marie," Helen said. "Perhaps we can get back in a little less time than that, though I hardly think so. If baby wakes and is hungry, give her a little cream and hot water. Don't make it too sweet, though. And be sure to keep Faith out of mischief."

The two were soon seated in a car, and chattering as fast as their tongues could say the words. It is curious how a person is stimulated to talk in the street cars. Whether the motion of the car acceler-

ates the motion of the tongue, or whether one involuntarily tries to oppose the rattle of the car with the sound of the voice, I do not know. But, once started, the words seem to come of themselves. Our travelers almost forgot to change cars at the Square, and as soon as they were seated in the west-bound car, they launched out into their talk once more and were soon oblivious of all around them.

Suddenly the car came to a rude stop that almost threw them to the floor. They were still struggling to regain their balance, when they heard a storm of shouts and oaths and curses. The driver of the car was seized by two or three ruffians and hurled bodily out over the fast-gathering crowd on the stone pavement. He lay there limp and motionless.

A louder shout drew the frightened eyes of the passengers to the other end of the car. The conductor was sharing the fate of the driver.

The crowd was now denser, reaching to the curb on both sides of the street. Policemen were running to the scene from all sides. Their clubs were swinging in the air like flails. But for every swinging club there were a hundred angry fists, and the keepers of law and order were knocked to the ground, bruised and bleeding, and tramped under foot like logs.

"Away with the car!" shouted a maddened voice, distinctly audible above the tumult.

"Away with the car!" came in answer from five hundred hoarse throats.

Paving blocks crashed like shrieking bombs through the windows.

A bundle of fish-plates came rattling through the roof.

Then suddenly loud voices were yelling:

"Stop! Stop! A lady! A lady!"

There on the rear platform stood a terror-stricken, shrinking form, frantically beckoning with its hands.

It was Corine.

At the first approach of the mob the passengers had crouched down on the floor of the car. There were three men in the car, and Helen and Corine. When the missiles began to fly, the terror of the passengers knew no bounds. The mob of excited men had evidently not taken thought that there might be passengers on the car. In their position of refuge on the floor they could not be seen from outside. Now they were doomed to certain death.

Helen appealed to the three men to help them. They seemed not to comprehend her meaning at all. They huddled there with teeth chattering and eyes starting and reason gone.

Then a thought struck her. The mind acts with wonderful velocity at such moments, if it is only kept clear. Here was Corine, who was informed on questions of capital and labor; nay, Corine who had swayed that countless throng at the Auditorium at that great meeting only a few days before. Should she not be able to control this angry legion? She would propose it to her.

"Corine," she said, and each of the young women noticed how colorless the face of the other was, "will you not step out and try to quiet them?"

Her voice was scarcely audible above the horrible confusion.

But Corine understood.

She was amazed.

"What do you mean, Nellie? I go out there? It would be instant death."

"Corine," said Helen, "what will it be if we remain here?"

"Oh, I can't do it," moaned Corine, wringing her hands in agony.

Helen saw that she must take desperate action. She would willingly have tried herself to quiet the mob, but she wished to save all their lives, and was certain that Corine would gain an immediate hearing even from this wild, frenzied crowd, because

they would know her, and had been so completely under her control before ; whereas the sight of herself, a stranger to them, well-dressed and with jewels, would only inflame them the more, fierce as was their hatred against all who were accounted or seemed to be rich.

Helen looked into Corine's eyes with a look that was not to be opposed.

"Corine," she said, "you must go out and speak to them. It is just the work for which you are fitted. There is no time to be lost. Go."

Corine was helpless. She obeyed, hardly knowing what she did.

The result was as Helen had anticipated.

When the violence ceased, Corine gathered courage.

"Hush, hush," cried a rough voice. "Listen to the lady."

"Down with the ladies. My wife ain't got no jewelry," shouted a drunken ruffian.

"Put 'im out," shouted another. "It's the lady wot speeched at the meetin' the other night."

"Wot's fine speeches goin' to help us?" brawled the drunkard. "Down with 'er, I say."

"Shut him up," called a commanding voice. "Madame, you'd better come off the car. We're goin' to fire it."

Corine was about to reply, when the men at the other end of the car began a fearful fusillade of missiles. They had not understood why the proceedings had been delayed, and had grown impatient at the stoppage of the work of demolishing the car, knowing that new forces of police would soon arrive upon the scene.

Several men ran forward to draw Corine from the platform to take her to a place of safety. She saw them rushing toward her, and with a shriek ran back into the car, where she fell on the floor in a swoon.

Helen knew then that there was nothing else to be done than for her to attempt to gain the front platform. This she would essay to do.

It was well for her that some of the mob saw her as soon as she rose in the car, for she never could have passed alive through the storm of missiles which she had determined to brave.

The men at the rear of the car had been shouting to those at the front to desist, but the shouts had been unheeded or misunderstood. None of the men had dared to enter the car to attempt to save Corine. It seemed too much like certain death to go after her.

When Helen rose she was observed, and the storm began to desist. A few blocks were still fly-

ing at the car, hurled by the men farther in the rear of the crowd. One of them struck her left hand, but in the excitement of the moment she did not wait to notice whether it had inflicted serious harm or not.

When she reached the platform she was greeted by the coarse voice of the drunken fellow who had so grossly insulted Corine. He had wormed his way to the crowd at that end of the car, having a vague idea that the men there were of a baser sort than those he had endeavored to incense into violence against Corine. He was circulating a report among them that the car contained several of the railway stockholders with their wives. As Helen appeared, he yelled :

“There’s one, knock ’er down.”

At the same time he threw a stone at her, which fortunately flew wide of its mark.

The men were in an ugly mood. A committee of their wives had called on the wives of both the railway president and the vice-president, and had been refused admittance.

Was Helen one of these women? They looked at her and grabbed the blocks in their hands tighter.

But Helen had raised her hand with a quiet gesture that asked for silence. She was speaking

now. Corine heard her, half-revived from her faint.

"My dear men," said Helen, "why do you wish to kill us? We have done you no harm. What a shame, to attack poor innocent women! Will our life-blood raise your wages and give your children bread? Have I ever done anything else than wish you well? Why, even now we were on our way to the west end to help one of your poor suffering wives. Will you not disperse and allow us to proceed?"

"It's the lady as is always ben helpin' my neighbor's wife that's ben sick all winter," cried a stalwart voice. "Ain't it, John?" And he appealed to the man standing next to himself.

"That's who it is," answered he. "She's all right, boys. She's done lots of us poor folks kindnesses as no one else would do in her place. It's a shame to treat 'er this way."

"Three cheers for the lady, God bless her," called another voice.

The change that came over the crowd was marvelous.

Men who a moment before had been frenzied with rage were now wild with good-will toward her whom they recognized as their true benefactress. The three cheers were rendered with

tremendous vigor. Then the horses were brought and attached again to the car. The conductor was reinstated on his platform. The driver was taken up, and when it was found that he was unable to stand a hundred volunteers offered to take his place. The track was cleared and everything in readiness to start the car, from which the broken glass and the splintered wood and the missiles that had been thrown in had been removed, when Helen asked them to wait one moment.

"This lady is not in condition to go on," she said, pointing to Corine. "If one of you will send for a cab we will go home."

"No, no," protested Corine. "I'm quite strong again, Nellie. It was only a momentary weakness, that's all. If you are able to go on, I feel perfectly able to accompany you."

Helen endeavored to persuade her, but to no purpose, and the car was soon carrying them with unwonted swiftness toward their destination. There was no schedule time to observe, and no passengers cared to enter the badly dilapidated car. When they reached S—— Avenue the driver stopped the horses and said to Helen:

"We will wait here for you, lady."

Helen hurried with Corine to the humble cottage where the Schneiders lived.

"I can stay but a moment, Mrs. Schneider," she said. "We had quite an adventure in the city, and should not have come at all, but I have been so worried about you, you know. How are you?"

"Oh, I be so much bedder, Miss. De lass med'cine vot you bring, he haf done me so good, an' de shpring air, he seem helps me more yet."

"Yes," said Helen, smiling, "God's medicine is always the best. But we must be going. Mr. Schneider will tell you about our mishap. He was there. Is he in the strike, too?"

"No, Miss, not him. But he can't not vork by de barn. Dem odder men, dem don't not let him. He go down town dis morning to see if he find some odder vork."

"Ah yes, I see. Now, good bye, and I hope you will soon be entirely well." And Helen took the wasted hand in hers and gave it a warm grasp of farewell.

"Goot bye, Miss. Gott bless you an' bring you safe home."

The car was waiting for them. They entered, and were soon at the Square again. From here they were obliged to walk home, as the car which had taken them out and return was the only one in sight, and it could not be shifted. It was the last car that was run in the city for three days.

When they reached Helen's home on A—— Street, Corine fell into an arm-chair and wearily removed her hat and gloves.

“I think I'll go up stairs and lie down a while,” she said. “I feel rather tired after our experience; don't you, Nellie?”

“Well, I do feel rather nervous, I must confess. I'll go up and lie down with baby. Perhaps we'll both go to sleep.”

Helen did fall asleep. She waked up and looked at her watch. It was half past eleven. She had slept over an hour, and began to fix hurriedly for dinner, as Marie was very prompt and did not like to be kept waiting when a meal was on the table. When she had finished, she tiptoed across the hall and tapped softly at Corine's door. There was no response, so she went down stairs alone.

“Miss Hereford is sleeping, Marie,” she said. “We will not wait dinner. She will be down presently and will not like it if we have waited for her. Where is Faith?”

“She's with me in the kitchen.”

“Very well. Just bring in the dinner when you are ready. I am quite hungry.”

Dinner was soon on the table, and they began the meal. Helen ate very slowly, but Corine did not appear.

"You may set the things into the warming-closet, Marie," said Helen, as she finished eating.

"O Mrs. Chamberlain, I forgot to tell you," said Marie. "There was three gentlemen here to see you. They said they would be here again after dinner."

"Were they together?" asked Helen, wondering who it could have been.

"No ma'am, they all came separate."

The bell rang at that moment, and Helen was called into the reception room by Marie, who had gone to the door.

"Excuse me for interrupting you so soon after dinner, Mrs. Chamberlain," a polite young man was saying to her. "But we go to press at three, and I would like to speak to you a few moments before making up my assignment of copy."

He bowed and handed her a card that informed her that he was called James Monroe, and that he was reporting on the *Journal* staff.

If there was anything that Helen disliked it was newspaper publicity, so she determined to say nothing except what was necessary to be civil. The young man was affable in the extreme and a splendid conversationalist. He asked her a number of questions, but she begged to be excused from discussing the occurrence in the car that morning. He

asked her pardon, put away his tablet, and began to talk of other things. Gradually the talk drifted back to the strike and the morning's happenings, and soon the young man left, having made a very agreeable impression on Helen. This ordeal she passed through three separate times, and she wondered how much alike the reporters were.

She wondered still more when the evening paper came and she found that the reporters had learned all about the affair from her own self. Great display types had flashed down the heading, "A BRAVE ACT;" then, "A MODEST WOMAN FACES AN ANGRY MOB AND THEY CHEER HER TO THE ECHO;" then, "HER COMPANION, THE WELL-KNOWN AGITATOR, MISS HEREFORD, FALLS INTO A FAINT, WHILE MRS. CHAMBERLAIN BOLDLY QUELLS THE MADDENED MEN."

Then followed a sensational description of the morning's scene. Then the account went on to say: "A *Journal* reporter called at the refined and aristocratic home of Mrs. Chamberlain this afternoon and learned the following details." It made Helen fairly blush to see what a multitude of details he had learned from her. The whole trend of the article was in her praise and to Corine's disparagement. But I am anticipating.

It was half past two when the last reporter left. They had followed on each other's heels in a fashion that led Helen to believe that each was only waiting for the other's exit before making his own appearance. As soon as the last one had bowed himself out she repaired to the dining-room. No Corine was there. She rang for Marie, and questioned her.

"No, the Miss has not been down."

Full of alarm, she hurried up the stairs. She tapped at the door again, and this time a feeble voice said, "Come in."

When she entered, Corine was just waking from a restless sleep. Her face was flushed and her lips were dry and feverish.

"Why, Corine," was Helen's greeting, "you are sick."

"No indeed." Corine tried to say it cheerfully. "I'll get up now."

"You shall do no such thing. I will ring for Marie, and she shall bring you something to eat, and then I'll send her around the corner for Doctor Smith."

"Why, Nellie, that would be absurd. See, I can get up as easily as you please." She suited the action to the word, at least she tried to, but instead of getting up she fell back on her pillow.

"See, what did I say?" said Helen.

"Oh, that's nothing. I was just a little dizzy and weak."

"And that's just the reason why I want your dinner brought up, because you are a little dizzy and weak."

Corine submitted, and the dinner was brought up. Without any more words on the subject the doctor was sent for. It was six o'clock when he came. By that time Helen had had opportunity to see the evening paper, reading what has already been mentioned above.

The doctor looked non-committal, as all doctors always do. It is extremely doubtful whether they ever look grave, as books would have their readers believe. He said that Corine's system had evidently been overtaxed, and that the nervous strain had been too much for her that morning. He ordered that she be kept from any excitement, that she see no newspapers and learn nothing further about the strike, and faithfully take the powders he left, and get as much sleep as possible.

Helen followed him to the door and asked him whether there was any danger.

"Just keep her quiet," was his evasive answer. "I will be here again in the morning. Good evening, Mrs. Chamberlain. Excuse me, sir," for he

had almost stumbled over a man who was coming up the step.

Helen saw at once that this was another newspaper man. She determined that she would tell him nothing, even at the risk of being accounted rude. So when he said, "Good evening, Mrs. Chamberlain; Doctor Smith, I believe. Is Miss Hereford sick, or is it some one else in the family?" she answered :

"Sir, I must really decline to be interviewed any further, and if I can be of no other service I must beg to be excused."

"Certainly Madame," he said, with Chesterfieldian politeness. "Pardon me for troubling you. Good evening." And he went.

She shut the door hastily, for fear that he might change his mind, and hurried back to Corine's room, where she spent the remainder of the evening, leaving her only long enough to go to the telegraph office a few blocks distant, and send the following to Harry :

"Do not let newspaper reports alarm you. Am all right, and have come to office myself to forward this. Corine is better."

Imagine her surprise the next day when she came down after having helped Corine with her breakfast, to find in the *News* a full account of

Corine's prostration. Could Doctor Smith have divulged what she had so unceremoniously declined to tell? She called Marie.

"Marie, there was a gentleman here last evening just after the doctor left?"

"Yes m'm."

"Did you notice whether he went in the direction of the doctor's office?"

"No m'm, he didn't. When you let him out the front door he come 'round to the back."

"What did he want?"

"He said he wanted to see me. He heard I was a good girl, and he wanted to know if I cared to change my place."

"What did you tell him?"

"I told him, 'No indeed.'"

"Did he go then?"

"No. He was a awful nice young man, an' he staid a wile, talkin' to me."

"What about?"

"Oh, just 'bout things in generly."

In spite of her vexation, Helen smiled. But she came to the conclusion that she had not treated the young man any worse than he deserved.

Corine kept her bed for three days, at the end of which time the doctor allowed her to sit in the arm-chair well bolstered up with pillows. After

that she gained strength rapidly, and when Harry and his father returned they found her on the porch in the great rocker, sunning herself. She still looked a trifle pale, but otherwise her attack did not seem to have left any traces.

Helen had also telegraphed to Corine's parents at the time when she sent the message to Harry, telling them the newspaper reports were much overdrawn, and promising to inform them of the least sign of any change that might make it necessary for them to come to Corine. She wrote them regularly, twice each day, and, as her reports were so encouraging from the start, Mrs. Hereford, who had herself all in readiness to go at once, decided that the excitement of seeing her mother might do Corine more harm than good. So she wisely remained at Riverton.

During her stay in bed Corine had much to think of. In the first place, there was her failure and Helen's success. All she had accomplished when she faced the mob had been that a few of them were willing to take her out of the danger she was in. Helen, on the other hand, had induced them to restore the conductor and the driver, and to allow the car to proceed. She had not been able to say a word. Helen, though, had spoken to the men in the most natural manner. She had

been so frightened that she trembled from head to foot and in her inmost soul. Helen, though certainly afraid, had been calm and collected. She had fallen into a deathly swoon. Helen had been strong enough to bear up, and in addition to take care of her. What was the secret of Helen's power?

Of course there was the fact that Helen had come into contact with some of the men. But had she not herself come into contact with them when she addressed them at that meeting at the Auditorium? Perhaps the majority of the street-car men had not attended that meeting. But neither had Helen come into personal contact with the great majority of them. And, after all, had they not all read her speech in the papers? Helen's modest deeds of kindness had not been blazoned forth publicly as had been her successful effort.

And so her logical mind had gradually again forced on her the question that she was so skillfully and persistently trying to avoid, "Can it be that Helen is right after all? Can it be that the woman who, as Helen terms it, remains in her God-given sphere wins more respect and has more power for good than the woman who chooses as I have elected?" These thoughts furnished her with material for many hours' reflection.

There was another thing that kept her thoughts busy. She had asked Helen to let her see the papers. "It will help me to pass the time," she said. She was ashamed to acknowledge that she wanted to see whether they made any mention of her performance when she had been put to the trial only to fail ignominiously. But, as she had expected, Helen had said she must not see the papers. There was no use in arguing with Helen. She knew that full well. She only ventured to say :

"I wish you and the doctor knew how it tortures a person's mind to lie here and have nothing to divert it."

"Just the kind of torture you need, Corine," Helen had answered sweetly.

Still another thing to call her thoughts into the torture. On the first day of her sickness a beautiful bouquet of roses had been sent to her. A card attached bore the name of John Perkins. Every day brought a fresh bunch of flowers—once carnations, once violets, once lilies, again roses. But there was no change of name, nor did John ever come to ask to see her. His messenger was ordered only to enquire how Miss Hereford was.

But that was all over now, and Corine was ready to enter with her old energy upon the pleasures they would plan to have as fast as her energy would re-

turn. Harry was overjoyed to find them all thriving so well when he returned. He told them how worried he had been.

"But how could you worry?" asked Helen.

"Didn't you believe my telegram?"

"Certainly I did. But there are some things we feel better about when we see them with our own eyes, especially when the woman who sends the information always makes light of any sickness or injury in her own case. How did I know but that you had lost an arm or a limb, and were cheerfully telling me that you were all right."

"Now, Harry, you know I am not so bad as that. Just see, I haven't a scratch except this little scab where a paving-block struck my hand. It was swelled somewhat, it is true. But, if I had telegraphed that my hand was slightly hurt, you would have come flying home with a corps of hospital doctors to dress the wound. Besides, you could learn from the papers that I had not lost any limbs."

"That reminds me, Nellie," put in Corine, "that you promised to save the papers for me. Can I have them now?"

"Oh, wait till to-morrow when Harry and I go to the factory. I always help him when his mail has accumulated. You'll be glad to have something to do to pass the time while we are gone."

“Well, well. Don’t you have a secretary?” asked Harry’s father.

“O yes, but he attends only to the letters that demand immediate attention. Harry likes to attend to the others himself. He says he wants his customers to feel as if they could do as well when they write to him as when they come to the city and see him personally. I tell him he is ‘cranky,’ but he says ‘crankiness’ like that pleases people, satisfies his conscience, and builds up business.”

“And he’s right, quite right,” observed the old man.

“Yes, I suppose so,” said she. “He always is.”

When they returned, the next day, it was almost noon. Corine had read all the papers. Helen saw that she had a strangely thoughtful air as they came in. She rose up to greet them, a bright smile on her face. But Helen detected the tell-tale tear-drops. With that tact which teaches the truly sympathetic that real pity is generally sparing of its words and often entirely silent, she said nothing.

The days that followed were filled with wholesome pleasure. The spring-time had come and the winter was gone, and summer would soon be at hand ; and, best of all, the change of the seasons was a beautiful type of what was being wrought in Corine’s soul.

CHAPTER XXI.

A SURRENDER.

IT was a wiser Corine that came back from X. some weeks later, wiser than the one who had gone there filled with the idea of her importance as a factor in the realization of that much-coveted result to which men are pleased to apply the term millennium. Her mother noticed the change at the first glance, and said anxiously:

“Corine, what makes you look so strange? Are you really sure that you do not feel any effects of your sickness?”

“Quite sure, mother,” replied Corine. “But I will confess that I feel the effects of several other things.”

“Well, what?” pursued her mother.

“I’ll not tell you just yet, mamma. When I am sure of myself I will tell you all about it.” There the subject rested for the time being.

Mrs. Hereford soon saw in what direction Corine was drifting. She found that her brilliant daughter had lost all interest in the meetings of the “Re-

form League," and the "Twentieth Century Association." She still attended the meetings, but, where she had formerly taken so lively a part in the discussions and so active an interest in the work of both clubs, she now rarely spoke, taking the floor only when asked for her views on the question that happened to be up for debate. After a time she began to have excuses for not attending. Then it was not long until she would say, "I do not care to go, mamma ; please ask them to excuse me."

Her mother was not pleased with the turn affairs were taking. She had been fostering high hopes of the brilliant career her daughter would be sure to accomplish. She was a woman who craved honor and fame, easily satisfied with the cheap trumpery of newspaper flattery, and she had been proud with joy when she received the papers announcing Corine's great success at X. She had, it is true, felt some misgivings when the ridicule of those self-same papers was directed so mercilessly against Corine, almost before the ink with which her praises had been sung was dry on the pages of their preceding editions.

Mrs. Carson, the leading spirit of the "Reform League," had assured her that that was done simply to have something sensational with which the columns of the paper could be filled.

“You have no idea, my dear Mrs. Hereford, to what lengths these newspaper men will go ; yes, and to what depths they will stoop when they want copy to satisfy the demands of their insatiable readers. You remember my cousin Jem, who visited us last summer and addressed the ‘League?’ He is now connected with one of the great dailies in San Francisco. He has told me some of the things that take place behind the scenes in the offices. It is almost incredible how news is sometimes ‘manufactured!’ No other word can express it. You see, the paper has to appear at such-and-such a time, and it must be filled with reading matter, whether anything has happened or not. When nothing of a sufficiently interesting nature has taken place, something of an uninteresting nature must do duty instead ; and, to do this duty acceptably, it is dressed up in the garb of the sensational. Depend upon it, the papers have wronged our girl. Does she not deny the printed reports?”

“I cannot bring myself to speak of it to her,” answered Mrs. Hereford. “I have tried to lead the conversation up to the subject a dozen times, but Corine as often has refused to be led. You see, in conversation she is more than a match for me ; and I cannot persuade myself to ask her about it directly.”

“Well, perhaps you can catch her napping some time, and then you will find that I am right, and that there is no dependence whatever to be placed on these newspaper reports.”

Mrs. Hereford went home wondering about two things. First, about the volubility of her estimable friend, Mrs. Carson ; secondly, about her inconsistency. For, if the papers were not to be trusted when they criticised Corine unfavorably, were they to be trusted when they praised her? She concluded by determining that if she would know the real truth she would be obliged to ask Corine herself. As she had not the moral courage to ask her in a straightforward manner, she cast about for an indirect way, and this was not difficult to find when once she began a diligent search for it. When they were out driving alone a few days later she suddenly said :

“Corine, why is it that you do not care to go to the meetings of the ‘League’ and of the ‘Association’ any more?”

“Well, mamma, I have grown tired of them. I actually don’t care to sit there and listen to that bouncing, foolish Mrs. Carson, with her long flourishes about things of which she knows nothing.”

“Why, Corine, you should not speak so disrespectfully of your elders and superiors.”

“Well, she should not speak to her youngers and inferiors as she did to me yesterday. And does she know anything? Here she talks wisely about the slums of New York and London, and about work there; and she has never been in either city, and it's to be hoped in mercy to the cities that she never will be.”

“But you used to like to hear her, Corine. You and she were invariably on the same side in debating any question, and you know it.”

“Well, but that was before—.” She stopped short.

“Before what?” asked her mother quickly. She was afraid the advantage she had hopes of gaining would escape her grasp again.

“Before I knew better,” answered Corine curtly.

Her mother saw that she was baffling her, and very easily at that. She could muster only enough courage to say meekly :

“That isn't what you were going to say, Corine.”

“No, it isn't, mamma,” replied Corine honestly, “and it's just a shame how you and I beat about the bush lately. Why don't we talk freely and straightforwardly about the things we have on our minds, I wonder.”

“We could if we both would,” said her mother with a smile.

"Well, I for one am going to do it," asserted Corine.

"So am I," said her mother. "And, to begin, allow me to remark that you should not say 'well' so often when introducing your sentences, my dear."

This broke the ice effectually, and they both had a good laugh.

"Well, I suppose I learned that from Mr. Chamberlain. He says it so often. But he's a dear good man, and I like him ever so much."

"You began with 'well' again, my dear."

At this they indulged themselves in another informal laugh. Then Corine said :

"We're as slow as ever about getting at the point, mamma, in spite of our resolution. Now, I'll tell you what I intended to say when I cut myself so short a moment ago. I was about to make mention of two things: in the first place, a process which, I now see, had been going on in me for a long time before it reached its present stage ; in the second place, my going to X."

"I can't imagine what the first can be, but the second I had suspected, and it is just what I have been wanting to discuss with you for some time, but you would not let me."

"I know I wouldn't, mamma, and it was very unkind of me to act as I did. But now, discuss

away, and I will not treat you so shamefully any longer."

"What I have been wanting to say is that it seems to me that because you were so unfortunate at X. you have lost all your interest in the affairs in which you were totally absorbed before you went there. Isn't that true?"

"Well, mamma, I'll not deny that I was rather rudely taken down there."

"But I do not see how that should so easily entirely discourage you. You know how the papers, all without exception, lauded you to the skies when you addressed the mass-meeting there. Now, I fail to see why you should feel so crestfallen when they prove faithless and poke fun at you because you were the innocent and unfortunate victim of a physical accident. I do not see the logical connection at all, between the circumstances and your actions."

"But do you not think the papers had a right and a reason to say what they said?"

"No, I do not. Mrs. Carson told me the other day—"

"To be perfectly frank with each other, mamma, as we have resolved to be, I would say that it will be best to leave Mrs. Carson out of our conversation altogether."

“Well, if you so wish it, I can leave the dear creature out; though what harm she would do any one I cannot imagine. Nevertheless the truth remains, that the papers report things not in order to be fair to the right and the truth, but to further their own ends.”

“Yes. But what the papers said in this case was true.”

“It may have been true, and still told in such a way as would convey a false impression, you know.”

“Now, mamma, to cut the whole matter short, I am going to tell you just exactly what has happened to me, and what impression it has left on me; and, as it is so serious a matter, I hope you will consider it seriously, and not say, as soon as I have finished, that you think I’ll get over it. To make it all plain, I’ll have to drag in number one first. You know that I said a process had been going on in me for some time. This has been very long, perhaps longer than I myself know. You know how intimate Helen and I have always been. You know, too, how different we have always been. What I thought were the grandest things in life she thought grand mistakes, and what she thought the ideal of wisdom I thought the summit of simple-heartedness and folly. We often had our

arguments about these things, and the wonder is that we remained as good friends as we did.

“ ‘From time immemorial,’ as the speakers say, Helen has tried to persuade me to her views. I have told you about that before, but I do not think you ever paid much attention to it. One thing is queer, too. She did not make so much of an effort to convince me that her ideas of a woman’s life were better than mine, as she made to convince me that I ought to be an out-and-out Christian. Of course, here lately, since I have been so proudly pluming myself as a full-fledged female monstrosity, she has taken hold of me on that question also. But her first efforts, when we were school-girls together, were to get me to join the church. She was always so shy about it, dear little Nellie that she is ; but, just the same, that touched me more than if some one had come blustering at me like the great ‘evangelist’ I heard in New York last winter. I never acknowledged to Helen that her entreaties made any impression on me. Sometimes I must have been very rude. I know I have often dropped the subject so cold-bloodedly that she must have thought it was an awful bore to me. Indeed, I am not sure whether I knew myself that what she said made any impression whatever on me. A few times I weakened, I remember, but

it did not last long. I have found now, however, that her words were making an impression on me all along.

"Well, by and by Helen goes and gets married—"

"She got married first, my dear, and then she went away," corrected Mrs. Hereford facetiously. The talk was seemingly becoming too serious for her.

"You mustn't interrupt me, mamma. It's a long story, I know, and I have quite a 'gift o' the gab,' but it will do me as much good to tell it all as it will do you to listen to it."

"Why, I want to hear it, child. Go on. I interrupted you only from force of habit."

"Well, Helen got married and I went to college and then to New York. We saw nothing of each other for over two years. Then I go up to X. to make my first visit and a grand splurge. Instead, I make a grand fizzle, and lie around sick on their hands for a whole week."

"I don't see where the fizzle comes in. If your speech was not a grand success, then I fail to understand what a success is."

"Wait a bit. When I get through you will see what I mean. The very day I got to X. I was struck with the air that pervaded Helen's home. You know how I always liked it at uncle's house.

Helen's home is just like that, only more so, as Fannie Green would say. She has two of the sweetest babies, and the grandest husband, and the loveliest home,—I just wish you could see her in her home. Mentally I contrasted my mode of life with hers. I was actually envious of her. I consoled myself, however, with the thought that I was doing more good in the world than she was. I thought this all the more strongly when I was entrancing that immense audience at the Auditorium that night. I had barely left the hall, though, when all my glory was trailed in the dust."

Corine related the incident of the half-starved boy, and also told of the criticism that had been bestowed on her by Helen and Mr. Chamberlain.

"They were only jealous," her mother commented.

"No indeed, mamma. Don't say that, and don't for a moment think it. Neither Helen nor Mr. Chamberlain is that kind of person."

"Well, go on with your story. I think it is very interesting."

"All right. The next day we were reading about the street-car men's strike, and, as we were talking about it, it appeared that Helen, as great a domestic home-body as she is, does more actual work among the poorer classes than I ever even

dreamed of doing. Here I had been thinking that the only way to get anything really extensive and lasting done was to make great speeches and things, and that a person dared not trammel herself with a home and husband and children; and all this time Helen had been going quietly far ahead of me.

“You remember how she said in her graduating address that the home is the foundation of all else? Now, let me show you what she has done. She has founded a home of her own, and it is a home, not simply a place to eat and to sleep. By that she has set a good example. Think of me, giving the people advice about their home life, and myself despising home life. By having a home of her own Helen has furthermore made herself competent to go right into the houses of others and help make homes of their wretched hovels, and by helping to found homes she has helped uplift humanity. Don't you see, mamma? It's all as clear as a crystal, and as beautiful too.”

“It does seem that way, but are you positive there is no mistake in your logic?”

“Positive as any one can be. I have thought it over again and again to see whether there were any holes in it. It all seemed too simple, compared with our fine-spun theories. But there isn't a

single flaw in the whole piece. I am positively delighted with it. I would just like to throw it into the 'Reform League' meeting like a bomb. Wouldn't there be an explosion? Mrs. Carson would snap my head off, if it weren't too much exertion for her."

"I thought Mrs. Carson was not to be mentioned in this conversation."

"That's so. Shall I go on?"

"Yes, certainly."

"A few days after this conversation came our encounter with the mob. You know all about that, for it was in the papers. I believe they reported every breath I took and every one I didn't take."

"Just what I said. An overdrawn account, to fill up the papers and to set people at gossiping."

"I don't think it was much overdrawn. Of course, I do not know how I acted, because I was half out of my mind with fright, and entirely out of it for a while with a faint. But I know this much, that what they said in Helen's praise was not overdrawn in the least. As frightened as I was, I could see how heroic she was. I tell you, mamma, she was positively grand."

"But how did it happen that you were so frightened and she was not?"

"I have thought of that a hundred times since, and I have come to this conclusion. We were both facing certain death. We both knew it. I was afraid to die, and she was not."

Corine was silent. Her mother was likewise. Their thoughts seemed to be busy with a subject neither could broach, in spite of their resolution not to beat about the bush. Mrs. Hereford at length broke the silence.

"How was it that Helen had such power over the mob? The papers said, 'Angry cries for blood turned into three cheers for Mrs. Chamberlain.'"

"Don't you see? Some of them recognized her as the person who had helped them in their troubles and sickness and so on."

"Didn't they recognize you?"

"Yes, but all they saw in me was a person that could make a speech. Some of them were willing to get me off the car and take me to a place of safety. But for her they cleared the car, took the obstructions off the track, and ran the car out four miles just where she wanted it, waited there for her, and brought us back as far as they could toward her home. A person would hardly believe it, but I was right there all the time, and was wide awake too."

"Well?"

"Well, that's about all. I went to bed then to stay several days, as you know. I tell you, mamma, I was busy thinking during those days."

"Yes, but now let's get back to the point from which we started. All this, you say, has had an effect on you to make you take less interest in our meetings."

"I should think it has. I am not ashamed to confess that I am completely convinced that Helen's way is the only right way, and I want to be a woman just like her, what she calls a womanly woman, and our 'League' and the 'Association' are not calculated to make that kind of woman of me."

"Isn't the change a rather sudden one to make?"

"Why, no, mamma. Don't you remember that I said at the outset that it is a process that has been working in me for a long time?"

"Yes, that's so. I suppose now the first thing you will be doing will be to get married." And poor Mrs. Hereford, whose idol had so irreclaimably fallen, began to cry a little.

"No, that isn't the point," said Corine.

"I wonder what is, then. Isn't that what you consider Helen's wisest move?"

"No indeed, mamma. It would be an insult to Helen to think that."

"Explain yourself."

"I'll have to use Mrs. Carson's name, but as I'm in good humor now I will not care."

"Go on, child. Don't keep me waiting so long."

"Well, as Mrs. Carson so often says, 'we must strike at the root of the evil.'"

"Yes?"

"The reason why Helen is so womanly a woman is because she is a good, thorough Christian. The great mistake in me is that I am not a Christian."

"Why Corine, what ails you? Of course you're a Christian. Weren't you baptized, and didn't you go to Sunday-school for years, and haven't you a Bible, and don't you go to service often?"

"Yes, I am civil enough to the Bible and to Mr. Denton's sermons, as we reckon civility; but I am not a Christian, with true devotion to the Bible as God's Holy Word, and an unwavering trust in God's Word and God's Son; and I don't believe you are either, mamma, are you?"

"And you mean —?"

"I mean to go to Pastor Denton's this very evening and to ask him to give me private instructions in the Catechism, and to pray God for me. I am utterly ashamed of the way in which I have treated the good Lord God, and if He will accept me I shall be His hereafter."

She kept her word. That evening she surprised the pastor by calling at the parsonage and asking him whether she could speak to him alone for a few minutes.

A few days later, when Corine came in to bid her mother "good bye," as she was going to her first lecture at the parsonage, Mrs. Hereford said :

"Wait a moment, Corine. I want to go with you."

"What for, mamma? I don't think Mrs. Denton will be at home to-day."

"I do not want to call on her. I want to go with you to the lecture."

"But mamma, you are confirmed already."

"And have thrown away all I got at the time," rejoined her mother. "It will not hurt me to acquire it again."

Corine was surprised beyond bounds.

"Why, mamma, doesn't the 'League' meet this afternoon?"

"If the 'League' is a bad place for you, do you think it's a good place for your mother?"

Corine said nothing further, nor did Pastor Denton act as if he thought it anything strange that Mrs. Hereford came; and thereafter, whenever Corine went to lecture, her mother went with her.

The next letter Helen received from Corine

ended with these words: "Be sure to come home at Christmas, Nellie. I am to be confirmed then at St. Luke's. Yours, Corine."

"What does the girl mean?" said Helen to herself. She went to her desk immediately and wrote:

"What do you mean by telling me the happiest words I almost ever heard, in this strange, short manner? Is it really true? Write me at once, and tell me more about it. I shall certainly be there."

Then Corine wrote a long letter and explained it all. To say that Helen was happy is expressing what you know without any words on my part.

One day Pastor Denton said to Corine, "Would you prefer being confirmed at the parsonage in the presence of the church vestry and a few friends, or shall it be before the congregation?" He said this not because he wished her to choose the former, but because he knew that Corine was fighting a hard battle, and he thought perhaps that would make it seem easier to her.

To his glad surprise she said, "Why, Pastor Denton, when Christ has done all this for me, I think it is doing little enough if I confess Him publicly before all the world; and, if you are willing, I would much prefer having my confirmation at the regular service in the church."

Christmas day came, and the Chamberlains were at Riverton, and, before the whole vast concourse that gathered at St. Luke's on the birthday of the Christ, Corine stood forth alone and unattended, and "professed a good profession before many witnesses."

CHAPTER XXII.

ANOTHER SURRENDER.

IT would have been difficult to determine who was happier at Corine's confirmation, she herself or Helen. She herself felt like a freed captive, having worn fetters and chains for long years, and now at perfect liberty.

It had cost many a battle with others, but no more struggles with herself after the one that ended with her decision to let God's will be done in her. After she had been brought to see the beauty of Christianity and had been led to the decision to accept it fully and without reserve, she did not look back to the old life with any longings and regrets at its disappearance. There were no dead there to whom she desired to give burial. There were no friends from whom she desired to take a fond farewell. There were no flesh-pots in Egypt whose savor still delighted her and tempted her to return. She had been borne to a firm decision and a lasting one, and by it she would abide, and the pastor doubted whether he had ever had a pupil more apt or more earnest.

But if no enemies from within assailed her, those from without were legion, and they had attacked her with repeated and with desperate endeavor. Mrs. Carson was not the only one who fell upon her at all times and places. The other members of the "League" and the "Association" were too keenly appreciative of the fact that every single member counts, to allow her to leave them with impunity.

They all had their own stock in trade of arguments. One would openly ridicule the idea of churchliness, and show the superiority of human reason's intelligence over allegiance to the Word. Another would say that the church was indeed a fine thing, but that certainly the work of the "League" was more important. Still another would argue that the church would indeed be good and even sufficient, if it did not so recklessly neglect the most important part of its work, forgetting to attend to the temporal, the physical, social, and mental welfare of its members, and being too intent on the purely spiritual; and that the "Association" supplied just this important defect. A fourth could not at all understand why Corine should not be an earnest active member of both church and "League," assuring her that the objects of both were in perfect accord, and that the

“League” surely had no principles or tendencies that were against the Word of God.

But Corine knew all her opponents and their weapons and their soldiery, having engaged in debate with them on their own battle-ground scores of times. So their onsets ended in one inglorious defeat for themselves, and Corine pursued her purpose to its fulfillment. What wonder that this fulfillment caused her such joy, having been won after so many battles?

Helen’s joy was so great for the same reason. How many days she had longed and prayed for this self-same moment. How many impatiences and uncertainties and doubts she had suppressed. How many battles she had fought within herself on Corine’s account. And now, here was victory, decided, certain victory, for Corine’s voice was brave and strong when she made her public confession.

There was another in that great audience whose joy was perhaps equally great. It was a young man who sat with the singers at the organ. His round bass voice had never seemed so musical, so exultant and elastic, so buoyant and sympathetic, as it did that day. He sang with a happiness that was not simply of the eye and the lips, but was deep-seated in the soul. This young man’s name was John Perkins.

He walked home from the service alone. He was soliloquizing: "I do not know why I should feel so happy about it. Of course, there is joy among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth; but dozens have stood there confessing their faith and their hope, and, while happy that their souls had come to Jesus, I was not happy as I am to-day. It is true, Corine has always been more to me than others were. But when a woman tells a man 'no' in unmistakable terms, two separate and distinct times, it's queer that he feels a special interest in her yet. But I suppose it's like this. I've always felt certain that the reason why she sent me away was because I was crowded out by all that foolishness about woman's great opportunities and duties and the like. I suppose my tough old heart thinks that perhaps now she'll quit these follies, and then there will be a chance after all, maybe. Ah, well, perhaps there will be. But I am afraid I will never muster up courage to ask her again. What a cheerless thing life is, anyway." And, despite his heart's joy, he strode with slow and spiritless steps over the flagging that led proudly up to the new mansion.

Corine's joining the church was not to be simply a reception of the benefits of the church. She was willing to take up her full share of the church

work. Here she asked the advice of her Aunt Emma, and it soon became apparent that in Corine St. Luke's had gained a member who would one day bid fair to rival Mrs. Doner in efficiency. That day might be some distance away as yet, for efficiency in church work demands more or less experience. But come it surely would.

Among other duties, Corine had accepted a position in the choir. She had a rich, full contralto voice, just what they much needed at that time.

It was the most natural thing in the world that John should escort her home from the rehearsals, especially as the Easter music was put in practice immediately after Christmas, and he and she had some difficult duets to practice together. Not a few of his evenings were spent at the Herefords'. When Easter came, they knew their parts perfectly, but they had also made surprising progress in their acquaintance with each others' true selves. Although the Pentecost music had no parts that required their special practice together, still they seemed to think so, for John was at Corine's as regularly as ever.

What a difference there was in Corine, to be sure. It was a difference that did not lead him to think less of her, though. And as for her, she appreciated John's sterling worth as she had never

appreciated it before, since now she was occupying ground from whose heights true worth can be judged most accurately. There was no question about it: they loved each other more than ever, and he began to think that, after all, he might be emboldened to summon up that necessary courage which he had despaired of ever having again.

What he began to think must have really occurred soon after; for Corine was an eminently truthful girl, and one day in June she sat down and wrote to Helen as follows:

"I know you are coming to Riverton next week, Nellie dear, but the news I have to tell you will not keep even that long. The news is in the shape of an invitation. Here it comes:

"'Yourself and family are cordially invited to attend the greatest event ever having occurred or ever to occur in Riverton, namely, the incredible, never-to-be-imagined marriage of Miss Corine Hereford to Mr. John Perkins, one year from this date.'

"There, doesn't that sound as if Fannie Drew had composed it? You think I should say Fannie Green, but I don't mean Fannie Green. Do you know?—there is a great difference between Fannie Drew that was and Fannie Green that is. Fannie is indeed greatly changed. She is just as jolly and mischievous as ever, as John and I could testify

from recent experience with her ; but she has become such a darling womanly little wife and such a sweet sensible little mother, that her jolliness and mischief in their new setting seem like entirely new qualities. Perhaps I will be a changed creature too, after a few more years. Still, I am so changed already, since my visit to you last summer, that I hardly can see how I can change much more.

“How often I think of the thrilling events of that visit—that visit that finally brushed the scales from my eyes, or, let me rather say, that shattered the walls that I had built between myself and God and happiness. It was verily epoch-making in the full sense of the term; that is, if one dare apply so august a word as ‘epoch’ to the periods of as useless a life as mine had before that been.

“When I think of that experience I am always reminded of the hymn that you used to like so well. I have learned it by heart, and, do you remember, I once heartlessly laughed at you for doing the same thing? You know which one I mean, do you not?

“‘God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform :
He plants His footsteps on the sea
And rides upon the storm.’

“For it was on that storm of violence and terror that He rode triumphant into my soul. I am positive that, had it not been for God’s good and wonderful providence in leading me into that fearful riot at X., I would not now be a Christian girl. And yet I sometimes wonder which has done more for me, the quiet gentle influence of years of association with you, or the overwhelming influence of that terrible ordeal. I suppose God’s mercy has been attending me all these years, seeking my soul to save it. And I praise and thank Him daily for His goodness. Whatever the circumstances in which He has approached me with His Word of grace and mercy matters not so much. It is enough for me to know that He has found the lost sheep and is bearing it heavenward.

“But I thank God likewise for the other love that He has shown to me. I know that, were it not for His loving kindness, I would not now be happy in the prospect of my marriage to the best and dearest and grandest and noblest man on earth. You are at perfect liberty to take exception to my use of these superlatives, for you will want to bestow these titles elsewhere.

“To return to my invitation. You will undoubtedly think we are foolish for setting the exact day and date a whole year ahead, but we are

both intensely practical people, even if we do allow ourselves to become a little sentimental now and then. We may, of course, change the day, for we are not a particle superstitious about that. But I am as good as positive that the great event will take place on that very day. Begin your preparations now, so that nothing can deter you from being a guest at the happiest event in the past, present, and future history of Riverton. There, that's another statement to which you will without any doubt take exception. And, while you are at it, you might as well take exception to the unpardonable length of this was-to-be-short epistle. I can just see how vexed you are at being disturbed in your packing by this aggravating visitation. I'll grant your last exception (not the others, mind), and will close."

To give an idea of the extent of Helen's aggravation it will be sufficient if I state only this, that she sat down at her desk in the midst of a chaos of wrapping and packing and a half-dozen of other "ings," and wrote a long, long letter to Corine, so full of happiness that it might have led one to believe that it was her own wedding-day that was coming again.

Corine was right about the day and date. The wedding occurred at the appointed time. It was

not so large a wedding as Helen's had been, as the class was not invited. Corine would have been delighted to have them all, but her mother's health was not at its best at the time, so she deemed it inadvisable to have more guests than necessary.

That the class was not forgotten, however, was clearly shown by a chat the girls (it seems most natural to call them that still) were having after the dinner. John and Harry were with them, but the girls were doing the chatting. Helen's children had been carried off by those most grasping of all people, the grandparents, so the coast was clear for talking. It is Helen's voice we hear:

"Do you know, Corine, I have been thinking of a plan several times lately. I wonder how it will strike you. It's this: Don't you think it would be pleasant to have a re-union of the old class of '81 in June next year? You know it will be ten years then since we were graduated."

"The very thing about which I have been talking to John. Now, if we three are in favor of it, the others will surely be, don't you think?"

"I don't see why they shouldn't. It would be delightful. But who is to take it in hand?"

"Why, you and I, of course. They always appointed us as committee at any rate when there was anything special to do."

"Listen to that," said John. "I'll have to tell the class about that if we have the re-union."

"You shall do no such thing, Mr. Perkins," said Corine. "You know that that was not said for publication."

"So be it," said he, with mock resignation; "but you know how forgetful I am. I'm afraid I'll forget that you have forbidden me to tell."

"If you can forget that so conveniently, you can forget that I said the original too. But say, Nellie, what I have been wondering is, 'Where shall we have it?' The time will be easy to select. Most of them will want to attend the commencement, and we will have to regulate ourselves accordingly. But the place, that's the rub."

"Why not have it where we had our May merry-making?" asked John, with his eyes twinkling in reminiscence.

"Good head," said Helen. "These men do sometimes have an idea."

"I'd say the same if he weren't my husband," said Corine.

It was settled then and there that the re-union should be proposed to the others, Helen and Corine acting as a preliminary committee, and the Doner farm being selected as the spot suitable above all others, and in addition agreeable for its associations.

By and by the wedding party gathered at the front door to see the couple off. Their absence was to be six weeks at the sea-shore and in the mountains.

At the end of that time they promptly returned, glad to see old Riverton once more, and anxious to begin their housekeeping.

Mrs. Perkins and the others of the family who had been living with John in his house had already removed to their former home. The good old lady had never felt quite at home in the grand new house, at any rate.

"It's all so fine, I am continually worrying that I will spoil something. Then, during the time the girls have been at school, we have had to keep a girl to keep the big establishment in order, and I never could bear to have any one else around doing my work. Seems as if they couldn't do it to suit me at all. Perhaps that's because I'm so old-fashioned too. Then there is so much fine company since John has got up in the world so high, that I'm always afraid I'll do something while they are here that isn't style. I'll feel much better out at the old place."

She meant every word that she said, honest old soul. She had gone into the new house to please John, and she was heartily glad to get out of it

again. She liked the old place for its comforts. They were more to her than all the modern conveniences that John had put into the new mansion.

It is true, the old place had been considerably altered too. It was no longer outside of the city, the town having grown up all around it. The boys had platted the four acres into sixteen town lots. The people who bought them had erected very neat dwellings on them. In this way Jonathan Perkins' old garden patch had proved a treasure to his children in a manner he had never dreamed of, and had become quite a pleasant residence portion of the rapidly growing town. The old house had been entirely rebuilt to suit the fastidious demands of the tenants who might wish to rent it when the Perkinses moved into John's new house. Still, it had a plenty of the old marks, and the old associations of memory were all there. So it was by no means in the nature of a hardship, but rather the exact contrary, when the widow retired from the stately avenue and the fine house to the more modest surroundings of her old home.

Corine and John had continued to urge her to stay with them, but to their most urgent invitations she would not listen for a moment. She had the utmost faith, she said, in the old saying that no house is big enough for two families.

"You will be wanting to have things your way, as is perfectly natural and right," she said to Corine, "and I will not have sense enough to keep my nose out of your affairs. Old folks like me are fond of giving advice whether it is good or not, and we can't rest unless we are meddling in other people's affairs. We will be all the better friends, my dear daughter, if we do not live so close together."

She said this with so much candor and good nature that Corine could not forbear laughing.

"Yes, what a disgrace it would be if we would keep the neighborhood alive with our brawls," she said merrily. "Or if we would regale them with such sights as my chasing you around the yard with a broomstick, or your holding my head under the spout of the hydrant until I promised with a shriek that I would mix the biscuit the way you wanted it."

At this the good old soul had her turn to laugh, but she did not change her determination to do the wise thing and leave the young folks alone by themselves.

Paul and one of the twins had already founded homes of their own. The other of the twins was satisfied to leave the new place, all he asked being that he be allowed to stay with mother. As for the

two girls, they very much disliked to leave. But they thought so highly of Corine and were so devoted to John that they wisely hid their disappointment; and, after all, they were as happy as ever in the old home.

So John and Corine moved into the new house alone, and if I were telling a fairy story I might close now with saying that they lived long and happily together and died at a good old age. But, as it is not a fairy story, I must proceed, merely intimating that, if you suppose they are still living there and are still happy, you are entirely right.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CLASS ONCE MORE.

THE reason why Helen and Corine had always been so much sought after as committee members was not simply that they had a better insight into the affairs in hand than did the others. One of their strong points was that they interested themselves in their duties when appointed to serve on committees, and went at their work with promptness and energy. They had lost none of their old-time characteristics, although they had not served as a class committee for nine years.

As self-appointed committee on re-union they went at the work in hand with all their former energy. It made no difference to them that the time was a year in the future. They saw no harm in getting the arrangements made before it was absolutely necessary. As soon as Corine had returned, they began a correspondence on the plan. Their first step was to arrive at a thorough understanding between themselves of just what they had in view. They both naturally detested doing anything aimlessly.

It was not a difficult matter to arrive at an understanding on this important point. Then they proceeded to put themselves into communication with the other members of the class. The most of these were easy of access, and the others they found out by dint of careful inquiry.

They were gratified to find that their plan met with general approval. What pleased them still more was the information received from their former classmates without exception, that they not only approved of having the re-union, but, as far as it was possible to judge at that time, they were confident that they would be able to attend. The invitations sent out included not only the members of the class, but their families as well.

It had not seemed long when the winter was already gone, and April and May were passing swiftly by. The day set for the assembly found the identical great wagon in which the class had gone to the farm as middlers, drawn up before Deacon Doner's door. It was again decked out in the old colors, blue and gold. A merry company was congregating on the veranda, and not a few healthy, red-cheeked children were scampering about the lawn, much to the agitation of their mothers, who did *so* want their waists and dresses to keep clean, at least until they got them out to the farm.

There were eight of these youngsters trotting about the lawn. They all seemed to owe allegiance to one queen, in the person of our little friend, Faith Corine. She was now a young miss of almost six years. Little Ruth was just four, and a jolly team they made.

Then there were two little Greens, Thomas, jr., aged four and a half, and his brother, Walter Drew Green, almost two years his junior.

A little fellow whom they called Geordie seemed to be a great chum of theirs. His full real name was George Bennett Stevens, and he was only a few months younger than Tommy Green. They were naturally good friends, as Tommy's parents were next door neighbors of Geordie's grandparents.

George Bennett's little sister was a wee mite of two years. Usually she was the constant companion of her brother, but to-day she seemed entirely taken up with the more congenial company of a new friend she had made, in the person of a young Chicago lady named Marguerite Florella Smith, and at the mischievous age of nineteen months. With these two, evidently despising the company of the boys, was a young man named Freddie Schultz.

On the porch, in their mothers' arms, but

frequently transferred to the arms of their mothers' classmates, there were four more babies. One of these was Miss Gertrude Green, "seven months old last Saturday" her mother had "explained," she declared, "two hundred times this morning."

Then there was Master Frank Rodney Chamberlain, just two days older than Gertrude.

And there was a sweet little girl nine months old, whose mother called her Agatha. Harry was calling her mother Mrs. Schultz. You will know her better when I call her Milda.

Last, but, judging by the "fuss" her mother was making over her, not least, there was Miss Hazel Irene Smith, sister of Marguerite Florella.

We must make the acquaintance likewise of a few of the grown folks. This business-like man, sitting on the step, repairing a wagon wheel for Tommy Green, is Mr. Smith of Chicago. This pleasant-looking young man with the merry twinkle in his eye is the Reverend Gustavus Schultz, of B——, Pennsylvania. This sweet little body talking with Grandma Doner is Mrs. James Stevens. The two gentlemen to whom Pastor Schultz is talking about the Pennsylvania oil-fields you know. You say not? Why, you surely ought to recognize Willie Seeler and Rob Hoodley.

As for the others, you cannot mistake them. The Deacon is there, and Mrs. Doner and Erwin. The other children of the Doner family have gone to the farm already, starting early to have time to see to the completion of certain necessary arrangements. We have already spoken to Helen and Harry. Here are John and Corine. Tom and Fannie are there, of course. Jim Stevens, as robust and funny as ever in spite of his serving as pastor of a large congregation at C——, is trying to help Mrs. Smith with the baby. Jane Armster, you would have recognized her among a thousand women.

You miss somebody? Yes, some bodies. For neither Hal Lee is here, nor Mary Lansen, *nee* Charman, nor her sister-in-law, Ada Gray. You will see them all at the farm, however. They would have greatly enjoyed driving in that morning to join the crowd at the Deacon's, but it would not do to take the children out so early as would have been required to reach town from the country in time to start with the band-wagon party. So they just drove over to the farm, except Hal, who lived there, intending to give the others a royal welcome when they arrived.

It seems strange to see them all together here in Riverton once more, but the manner of their gath-

ering had been very simple. The Chamberlains, the Smiths, the Schultzes, and the Stevenses, had all arrived in the early part of the week, and had been visiting with their parents, who still resided in Riverton. The Grays had done likewise the week before, and were spending their time at Ada's home in the country. Willie Seeler, who had removed with his widowed mother to Boston, where he was in the insurance business, and Rob Hoodley, who was now living with his parents in New York, had arrived the day before, and had been guests of John and Corine. The others, the Greens and Jane Armster, were, as you know, at home in Riverton.

The crowd is ready to start at any time, but they are waiting for Pastor Denton and his family, whom Helen and Corine had invited to take part in the merry-making. Here they come now, and off they all start; the Dentons in their carriage, the Doners in their phaeton, but the rest all in the band-wagon. It is pretty tight squeezing, getting them all into the wagon, but it was as Jim said, "Arter we get started we will get shaken down and will have room to spare."

If such a thing were possible, this wagon-load was even more boisterous than the one which had gone out to the farm eleven years before, when

these folks were High School middlers. They laughed and they talked, and the children shouted—"hollered" expresses it better, perhaps—and the babies crowed and cried.

"Why, the ride itself is enough to reward us for coming so far," said Willie Seeler and Rob Hoodley with one consent.

When they reached the farm, the crowd at that end was waiting for them.

More new faces.

Gordon Gray, a sharp-eyed and sharp-witted and witty-tongued newspaper man from the booming West, where he and Ada had settled soon after their marriage five years before, and where they had become identified with their growing, pushing town's enterprises and interests. It was like feeling a breath from the prairies to meet them both. Ada's one-time sourness and crabbedness had not returned again. The two little ones who clung to her skirts as the wagon-load drove up showed no trace of having inherited any of that useless property from their mother.

"Is it a load of crazy folks, mamma?" asked Timothy, the first-born.

"I think it must be," answered his mother with a laugh. "And if we are not on the look-out, my son, I'm afraid we will catch the craziness too."

When the little fellow saw his mother enthusiastically greeting her schoolmates a few minutes later, he ran in alarm to his father and cried:

"Papa, papa, mamma's gone crazy. See, look at her."

But his father said, "Never mind, Tim. It's the kind of craziness that does people good. You and sister Jessie run and get crazy too, like those boys and girls that are piling out of the wagon."

If you had seen the two young Grays five minutes later, you would have noticed that they had taken their father's command seriously and were scrupulously obedient children.

The man standing there with Mr. Gray is Hal Lee. See how heartily Rob Hoodley is shaking hands with him.

"Where's the wife, Hal?" says he.

"Old bach," says Hal. "Which is yours, Rob?" scanning the women.

"Same here," says Rob. "Old bach."

Whereat they shook hands again, this time more heartily still than before.

"We've been shaking on the bachelor question," explained Rob to Mrs. Gray, who just then came up to greet him.

"Well, I've been in the neighborhood almost two weeks now," said she, "and, if reports are

worth anything, to-day will be the last time Hal will give you the bachelor's grip."

"Is that so, Hal?" says Rob.

"Fact," says he.

"In the same boat again," says Rob.

And once more they wring each others' hands almost off.

Here are some other folks that are anxious to speak to Rob.

"This is my brother, Rob," says Ada. "Peter, this is Mr. Robert Hoodley of New York."

"Happy to know you sir," says Peter Lansen. "You've met my wife, I s'pose."

"Well, rather," says Rob, shaking Mary's hand as hard as he dares. "I'd not be likely to forget the girl that sat across the aisle from me for three whole years. Where's the family, Mary?"

"He's sleeping," says Mary. "But he will not be very long, if this racket keeps up."

"It ought to keep up," says Rob. "We came here to-day to raise the roof. How old is the boy? And what's his name?"

"He was two years old last week. We call him Robert."

"After me?"

"O no, you conceited man! He's named after his uncle Robert."

“Well,” says Rob, “that must mean myself. I’ve got the rest of the children all calling me ‘uncle.’”

Smiling groups had formed everywhere, and in them all similar conversations were going on, the groups joining and separating, mixing and shifting.

The old-fashioned dinner was served at twelve o’clock by the sun. One huge long table had been set in the long dining room, and they all ate “at one settin’.” (This was Fannie’s phrase, of course).

What a meal it was! If that table didn’t groan it was because it could not get a groan in edge-wise, as the table-talk flowed so freely. There was chicken, genuine spring chicken, and mashed potatoes, and cold cream slaw, and cold boiled ham, and cold roast turkey; and white bread, and brown bread; and peas, and string beans; and cucumber pickles, and peach pickles, and spiced apples, and spiced pears; and three kinds of preserves, and as many kinds of jam; and apple butter, and peach butter, and pear butter, and grape butter; and several kinds of jelly; and nice sweet grass butter; and lots of milk, and whole pitcherfuls of cream; and apple pie, and cherry pie, and lemon custard pie, and raisin pie, and sugar pie for the children (old and young); and

coffee cake, and ginger bread ; and white cookies, and brown cookies, and marvelous cookies with white icing, strewed with red and blue and yellow sugar ; and rice pudding ; and chocolate cake, and cocoanut cake, and banana cake, and fig cake, and sponge cake, and marble cake ; and tea, and coffee ; and strawberries.

These things were all placed on the table in one course, and then the guests gathered round.

There was a short prayer by Pastor Denton.

Then they all addressed themselves to the task set before them.

It was a genuine caution to see them eat. Of course, there was more than enough for a whole regiment provided, but when I tell you that at the start Jim Stevens called out that they should all eat slowly so that they could eat more, and that they obeyed his commands exactly, and that there would be intervals when nobody could eat a bite for five minutes because Tom or Jim or Mr. Gray or Mr. Smith had said something funny, and that they remained at table fully an hour, you will believe me when I say that everything on the table was at least touched.

After dinner the men stretched about two dozen hammocks under the trees for the women and the children. Then they went down to the creek to

shoot turtles and try to catch a few fish, for fear they would not have enough to eat for supper, judging by the dinner. They were not to stay at the creek too long, as there was to be a regular class-meeting at four o'clock. Turtles were scarce and good shooting was still scarcer, fish and good fishing ditto, and the men returned in straggling groups, each group explaining that "the other fellows have the fish and the turtles."

At four o'clock the meeting came to order. Pastor Denton opened it with a fitting invocation. Then the old officers were declared still holding office. Tom once more made some witty "remarks by the chair," as he had done at that first meeting, thirteen years before. He then called on Deacon Doner to address the class.

The good deacon was equal to the occasion, and was loudly cheered when he finished.

"Now," said Tom, "the secretary informs me that she has no minutes of the proceedings of the class since its graduation, ten years ago. I shall therefore ask each member of the class to furnish us with a record of the actions and experiences of that part of the class with which he or she is most intimately acquainted, and of which he or she has been keeping track since June, 1881. Of course, there are some things with which we are all

acquainted, but it will not harm any to have those repeated too. Mrs. Thomas Green, you may begin."

"Nasty man, to make me talk first." But she did as he had asked.

When Fannie had finished her racy account of her life since she left school, not omitting a sly "dig" or two at Tom as of yore, they all agreed that he had made an excellent selection of first speaker.

He went the rounds, ending with himself. When all had finished they had a complete idea of just what they had all been doing since they had separated as a class. The narrations were not of a bright and happy nature throughout. They had all had their trials and disappointments, as well as their successes and happinesses; and, though the reading of this novel kind of minutes was frequently interrupted with laughter and applause, still, when Tom ended the list, they were all deeply impressed with that great truth with the expression of which he so beautifully closed:

"Life is real, life is earnest."

Pastor Denton was then asked to address them. He complied. They had asked him at a well-timed moment. Inspired by the narration of these

young lives, he took up the thread that Tom had touched at the close of his remarks, Longfellow's "Psalm of Life." With it as a text he gave them a delightful address, interspersing it, as he proceeded, with fragments of the poem, until he had applied the whole with the exception of the words with which he concluded his stirring peroration :

"In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle,
Be a hero in the strife."

They were still sitting under the spell of the thoughts that had been awakened by the proceedings of the afternoon, when the supper bell rang.

Nobody was the least bit hungry, but the good women who had been enlisted by Helen and Corine to "do the cooking" would think of no other arrangement—the folks *must* have supper.

It was a blessing that it was not so extensive as the dinner had been. As it was, it was bountiful enough, and bore unmistakable signs of having been prepared by those same lavish hands whose skill and perseverance had made that wondrous dinner possible.

After supper they all strolled and sat and stood around, everybody enjoying every moment. No-

body was in a hurry to leave. Nobody saw any inducement to leave. Nobody wanted to hear a word or think a thought about leaving.

There was ample accomodation for laying the children down when they got sleepy, and they were soon all stowed away, some lying straight as arrows, others coiled up in wonderful tangles, but all sleeping as only children can who have had free run of a farm for a whole long day in June.

The babies had been thought of likewise. All the old cradles in the neighborhood had been borrowed, and it was surprising how good the babies all were. The country air had evidently done them good also.

The grown folks stayed out on the porch until after eight o'clock. Then they went inside the house, and were soon gathered around the organ for a good "sing." All the fine old hymns were rendered by the full chorus, the deacon joining in as lustily as the rest.

At ten the adjournment of this most pleasant class-meeting came.

Then there was the rattling of the great band-wagon, the snorting of the horses, the yellow light of lanterns, the sleepy protests of the children, loth to wake up from sweet dreams, the slow "good byes," the cautious careful bundling up of the

babies, and off they were into the starry night, leaving the old farm and the old house to sink into peaceful, restful stillness after their exertions in entertaining the merry, lively class of '81, R. H. S.

The end of the week found most of the class at their respective homes, thinking over the happy time they had had as the guests of Helen and Corine. Helen was still at Riverton, dividing her time between her own home and Corine's. They drove out to the farm together on Monday of the next week. They had a few things to get, that had been left there on the night of the re-union. Besides, they wished to see the good women who had done so much toward making the affair a success from the epicure's point of view, and give them some compensation for their work.

They had not far to go. The very first woman on whom they called—she was the one who had taken the leading part—put a stop to their intentions.

“Why, ladies, what can ye mean by a wantin’ to pay us fer that? We’s all agreed that we’s enjoyed it as much as any o’ you’s. We’s hed more fun with the cookin’ then you’s hed all together, an’ we’s ’ll never fergit that day. An’ sech singin’! I tole Barb Sanders it wuz jest like the angels in heaven. An’ then to think o’ me takin’

pay fer a little work like that from Miss Perkins, as took my poor boy in 'er own house wen he wuz pert nigh killed in the fact'ry, an' nursed him there three hull weeks an' more, an' wouldn't hear to takin' no pay. I guess not! That hain't the kind o' critter Sallie Lakin is, no sir-ree. An' 'tain't no use o' you's goin' to see the ethers, 'cause they wouldn' take nothin' no more'n me."

So the girls' trip was cut unexpectedly short, and they drove home very slowly. They were talking about their old class-mates, whom they had seen all together once more, but who now were scattered to the four winds again. They had commented on each one, and nothing more was to be said, when Helen remarked:

"Well, Corine, we've talked about all of them, now, except ourselves. I haven't had a good chance to ask you any questions since I came. First we were so busy getting things arranged, and then the others came. How are you getting along?"

"Why, Nellie, haven't I been writing to you every week almost, ever since I came back from the mountains last summer?"

"Yes, I know. But I like to talk things over at any rate. It makes them seem more real than when you only write."

So Corine had to tell her all about her perfect happiness, and how much more she liked her new life than the old, and how good and kind John always was, and how much she was learning of him.

“What about nursing that boy that had the accident?”

“Oh, I didn’t want you to know about that yet. I wanted to do more before I told you that I had taken up a different kind of work with the new life. Nellie, I wouldn’t have believed it two years ago, but do you know?—I felt better taking care of that poor boy one minute, than I did all the while I was making that great speech at X. I am firmly convinced that my whole life at that time was a mere pretense. My own self pretended that it was doing the best that could be done for itself. Now I can’t understand how I ever could have been satisfied with the life I was then leading, while then I was so taken up with what I was pretending, that I was out of patience with you more than once for not agreeing with me. If you could know all the impatient thoughts that used to wriggle through my mind when you were so sweetly trying to benefit me, you would have a poor opinion of me. No, I know that isn’t true, for you are not that kind of girl. But you cannot

imagine how unworthy I feel of all the happiness that has fallen to my lot, and has become mine through your love and patience."

Helen's eyes were wet with tears. She was thinking of the days when she had been ready to despair of ever seeing Corine changed; and here she was, not only changed, but changed into a being of such surpassing loveliness and tenderness in her faith. Had not Pastor Denton's words proved prophetic? She remembered them now again, as vividly as she had heard them on the day they were spoken.

"Barriers that seem to you not to have been shaken an inch, may yet be ready to totter and fall."

Was it not so? Only two years ago, and Corine was placing herself seemingly beyond reach forever. But just that moment which had seemed to complete the barrier that separated her from her true life forever had proved to be the moment when this barrier's last inch of foundation was crumbling away, ready to precipitate the whole formidable structure into a mass of ruins.

"Ah, Nellie," continued Corine, "if only every soul that was going astray from the path that leads to its true life here on earth and to a happy life hereafter could have you hovering near as a guardian angel."

"You mustn't say that, Corine," murmured Helen through her tears. "I do not claim the credit of having saved you from unhappiness."

"For which very reason all the more credit is yours, Nellie dear."

They were both silent for some minutes.

"Of what are you thinking, Corine?" Helen presently asked.

"I was thinking of some of the foolishness we used to talk at the 'League' meetings. But it was worse than foolishness. It was downright wickedness, and I'm glad I discovered it in time, or rather, had it discovered for me."

"Do you know, Corine, that what pleased me most of all in your transformation was that you recognized that the first step must be accepting Christ?"

"Yes, Nellie; I wish all people could be brought to see the light as it has so mercifully shone on me. I wish all men and women could be induced to allow Christ to determine the steps they take and the positions for which they strive. I know now that there is no field of action, no sphere of being, no place of existence, that has not been provided for in God's blessed word and by Christ's precious doctrine. And oh, how happy all the world might so easily be, if they would only cease their mis-

taken notions, and allow themselves to be planned for and guided by the wisdom of the Master. The world will never find happiness until it learns and believes and trusts that God has ordered all things wisely, and that it is the part of wisdom to leave things in the order in which He has arranged them and in the places to which He has assigned them. This miserable foolish twaddle, about God's having been unjust to us women in giving us husbands, and in fixing a certain relation between us and them; this brainless chaff about God's having made a mistake in restricting our operations to so narrow a sphere as the home, when the relation that God has fixed between man and woman is the basis of so much earthly well-being, and when the home is the throne whose power influences the destinies of the whole vast mass of humanity, is positively sickening. It makes me almost despise myself, when I remember that I used to think every fibre of my being must be bent to spread those mischievous, destructive notions."

"Well, Corine, God has changed all that now. And since you have found His way, you and I are surely the happiest women in all the world."

Did she speak truth?

The picture that you see shall tell you, a picture mellow in the soft rays of the setting sun.

It shone with a benediction on their fair faces, faces that were bright with the earnest of the indwelling Spirit.

Its beams touched with glowing pride two manly forms reclining on the soft green sward, each waving greetings to the woman that he loved best.

It flashed with silvery-golden happiness on grandma's brow and baby's, smiling their welcome from the west balcony.

It kissed with affection the laughing rosy cheeks of Faith and Ruth, who bounded gleefully across the lawn to meet mamma and auntie.

It cast a sacred halo over the charming home.

And from the east and the west, and the north and the south, and above and below, there seemed to come a chorus of the voices of angels, singing sweet songs, and saying as they sang,

"Happy is the man that getteth wisdom. She is more precious than rubies. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

THE END.

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